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Fall flight

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ANNEX

FALL FLIGHT

BY ELEANOR GIZYCKA

GLASS HOUSES

FALL FLIGHT

FALL FLIGHT

By
ELEANOR GIZYCKA



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NEW YORK
MINTON, BALCH & COMPANY
1928

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MINTON, BALCH & COMPANY

Second Printing, September, 1928

Third Printing, September, 1928

Fourth Printing, September, 1928

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Printed in the United States of America by
J. J. LITTLE AND IVES COMPANY, NEW YORK

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PART ONE

FALL FLIGHT

MRS. SHAWN, then Susan Corbett, and the prettiest girl of her day in Cleveland, Ohio, married Jack Shawn and moved to Chicago when he was twenty-six and she sixteen. It was a runaway match. But their romance was of very limited duration. She never forgave him their indigent first years and the misery of her pregnancy, spent in a sordid room and alcove on Ohio Street. Shortly after their little girl, Daisy, was born, Shawn moved his green plush dentist's chair from Chicago Avenue to the new Venetian building on Washington Street. It was a big leap ahead. Shawn went into debt to pay the first installment of his rent. But almost simultaneously Mrs. Shawn inherited a substantial, if modest, legacy from her Californian grandmother. Thereupon Mrs. Shawn's reasonable ambition to get along in the world developed overnight into an obsession. In consequence, Mrs. Shawn began to despise her husband with a pitilessness which turned finally to hate: because he was reflective and lazy; because he drank too much; and because he was affectionate and tender-hearted and she could so easily hurt him. She hated his long insouciant body and slender neck, his over-long black eyelashes and his thin, hairy chest. His hollow chest, which grew rapidly more hollow until his death from tuberculosis when Daisy was seven years old. He died alone in Georgia, having written his wife up to the last that his health

was improving and that she was wise to remain on at home, as he felt were she to come south to join him she would find the place extremely depressing. And she, whose disgust for illness or weakness or failure in any form was a curious thing, had taken him at his word.

Jack Shawn's death afforded Mrs. Shawn an opportunity to sever all connections with her Ohio in-laws—a large and impecunious tribe—by the simple process of omitting to invite them to his funeral. As for a family of her own, so far as her circle in Chicago knew, she had none, or at least none she cared publicly to acknowledge.

"After all, the money is all mine. Always was mine," she reminded herself as she dressed for the final ceremony. The clumsy folds of her long widow's veil gave her grave concern and she adjusted the pins with trembling fingers. She was upset too by the discovery that the black gloves purchased by a helpful friend that morning were of suede, which pinched her finger-tips and set her nerves on edge even on ordinary occasions. She could hear the people assembling for the services in the little library below and feared she might be late. It would never do to be late at her own husband's funeral.

"All mine; all mine," she murmured out loud. Jack hadn't left enough of his own even to pay the doctor's bills or to cover his own funeral expenses. She patted a little more powder over her flushed cheeks. Her firm Greek face, with its starry black eyes and small full mouth, she thought not quite pale enough to suit the occasion. Terribly excited, a shade triumphant, she was keyed way up and therefore extremely irritable. She keenly felt her rôle as the romantic star of an important, even a fashionable, ceremony. Were not representatives from some of the very best families in town crowded together with an embarrassing assortment of Shawn's old

time friends around the casket downstairs? She had watched them from behind her drawn blind stepping from their carriages. Although Jack Shawn had been a hopeless drag upon her in society, still it could not be denied that some very important men had been sincerely devoted to him. Men he had run into round the race-tracks, in the bar-rooms, along the big hotel lobbies or even professionally. Not much of a go-getter in business, Jack; but attractive and amusing. And after the first few drinks or so, witty and gay and carefree—no better company among men in the whole of Chicago. He used to play cards all night long every Saturday with a group of men, some of them members of the Chicago Club, and come home after dawn, sweaty-faced, smelling of stale whiskey, his beard—how she loathed the feel of it—blue-black on his lank cheek.

Daisy Shawn, a little thing, sitting on the edge of her mother's bed, dressed likewise in black, which gave her a sense of strange importance, looked pale from the general disorder of the last few days.

"Mamma, I feel sick to my stomach," she said, interrupting her mother's reflections.

"Of course, naturally, you would—tiresome, tiresome, tiresome." Mrs. Shawn mumbled, a large black-headed pin between her teeth; she was trying all over again to flatten the stiff folds of her veil more becomingly around the pure and lovely contour of her face, in case, after the ceremony, the occasion should arise to toss it back: she might feel faint, might have to cry or something. Her flickering excitement was fast spreading into flame, and jumping up, without warning, she seized Daisy by the arm and jerked the child to her feet.

"Stop snuffling! Do you hear me? It's time to go down. You're not sick at all; what nonsense! Are you

listening?" Another violent shake knocked Daisy's hat down over her eyes and elicited a nervous indrawn whimper. A dreadful vision of Daisy's capacity for spoiling the aesthetics of the ceremony flashed across Mrs. Shawn's mind and with a note of cajolery in her voice: "Come along now, hurry dear—hurry up. Well, *cry* if you *want* to. . . ." After all, even a child really would be expected to cry at its own father's funeral. "Cry if you want to—but, hear me, Daisy—don't cry loud, use your handkerchief—and don't get your face all streaked up with your black gloves."

Six or seven years later, in the same room, Daisy Shawn was leaning, open-mouthed, against the side of her mother's dressing table, or rather bureau, as they called it in those days. Her excited eyes were fixed in a fascinated stare upon the remarkable beauty of her mother's face. The new upstairs girl picked up a blue, ruffled foulard gown from the floor where Mrs. Shawn had tossed it after a last minute change of mind and, slightly expanding her nostrils to mark her disapproval, replaced it with marked deliberation upon the bed. Maybe the collar wasn't quite fresh, Mrs. Shawn had said; and the shields were suspicious. She thought they needed changing. But in the back of her mind, as a matter of fact, lay quite another idea. She had decided suddenly she should dress up a little more for the occasion; for the ladies' lunch party, in honor of Mrs. Rutherford; for Mrs. Rutherford of New York, London and Bar Harbor, who was passing through Chicago on her way to Colorado Springs. Mrs. Rutherford—the Mrs. Rutherford.

But then (and her mind began to ripple like a small pennant in a light breeze) The Ladies' Home Journal had said in last month's issue: "Ladies of distinction prefer

to be under- rather than over-dressed." And this biege chiffon of hers, trimmed with Irish lace, unquestionably was rather dressy. But what had she between it and the blue foulard? Her everyday blue foulard? (Why, next year it would only be fit for traveling!) Not one single thing! "This comes from taking Daisy abroad last year and wasting all that money instead of leaving her at home. The child would have been happier off visiting somewhere. Useless expense . . . the price of a dozen dresses. And Daisy got the whooping cough . . . count on Daisy to fall sick . . ." As she raised her bare arms backward to pin on a picture hat of leghorn straw and ostrich feathers, her high full bust, pushed up by the palest pink, but perfectly uncompromising corset of the 1900's, looked as if it might burst through its flimsy covering. Her brow wrinkled—a radiant Greek brow, eclipsed beneath a heavy, low swung pompadour.

"Daisy—stop staring! Why do you always hang around when I'm dressing? You know I simply hate it." Mrs. Shawn glanced at the clock, saw she was late, caught up a second hatpin and jabbed through the dense chignon; negotiating an opening between criss-cross hairpins, jabbed again and this time pricked deeply.

"Oh, damn!" and springing to her feet, Mrs. Shawn whirled upon Daisy. "Leave my room—instantly—instantly. I demand instant obedience. I'm sick and tired of your hanging around. You'd drive any one wild. Staring and hanging around!"

Daisy shuffled across to the bed, picked up a blue hat lying upside down upon the counterpane, inspected its worn lining, and drifted across toward the open window. Most of the time, lately, Daisy had been feeling that she hated her mother. But still nobody, nothing in the world fascinated her quite so much. She simply could not

bear to leave the turbulent atmosphere of her mother's room. Things always happened around mother.

Mrs. Shawn, by now close to a fit of real temper but intent upon the delicate elongating of her eyebrows, pressed her lips together and appeared suddenly to be no longer conscious of the child. She slipped into her boned bodice, and picking up a shabby buffer, polished her nails while the maid "did" the high boned collar and long row of hooks across one shoulder and under the arm, skipping quite a few. When the maid's fingers fumbled at her belt, Mrs. Shawn smacked the clumsy hand aside and, with a jerk and a pull which threatened its strass buckle, fastened together herself the vicious twenty-three inch satin girdle. She ran a little fine comb, for the last time, up the shining contour of her back hair, and sent the maid running downstairs to see if by chance she had left that morning her cardcase and portemonnaie in the side pocket of the waiting, one-horse hired victoria. A last little touch, little twist, little pat—a final assurance of the big strass horse-shoe at the back upon which the union of skirt and bodice mostly depended; and catching up her gloves she called to Daisy, who, conscientiously, eyes averted, stood gazing out of the window.

"Daisy—hurry—run quick—upstairs in the spare room in a long box in the closet on the floor, get my parasol—my lace parasol—hurry—don't keep me waiting. I'll meet you at the foot of the stairs. Hurry" . . . and she turned aside to search under the paper of the dressing table drawer for a garnet bangle she thought she remembered hiding there. Mrs. Shawn had a flighty memory, combined with a suspicious nature. Constantly she hid her keys and valuables away in odd nooks and crannies, and often as not forgot herself where she put them.

Daisy's square-heeled button boots ran out the door,

upstairs. Tap, tap, quick and willing, overhead; thump, thump, down again. Mrs. Shawn dallied before the mirror, for one final backward glance. The beige chiffon might be a trifle dressy, but Worth had made it only last year in Paris, and Chicago was a good year behind the fashions. Catching up her flouncey skirts, she rushed to the door as Daisy from the stairway close beside it, jumped upon the landing.

Mrs. Shawn dropped her dress, snatched up the parasol, opened it wide to see if the taffeta still was intact, whirled about, started forward. . . . Rip—crack—rip . . . Daisy's square-heeled boot was planted fast upon the chiffon ruffles.

The child aghast, stumbled back, then forward again and as she righted herself her mother's hand caught her a stinging blow across one cheek.

"Fool . . . little fool . . . fool," cried the now half-hysterical Mrs. Shawn and, snatching up her mutilated petticoats in both hands, she flew back to her room in search of pins, slamming the door to behind her.

Daisy, shocked dumb, ran to her own room down the hall and locked herself in. Standing in front of her narrow dresser, hands clutched on the corners, she stood, trembling, wild-eyed, gazing at herself in the mirror as if to verify her own image. It was not the first time, of course! But it was nearly a whole year now since she had had her ears boxed. And that unmentionable affair with the bedroom slipper dated away, way back, somewhere in the dim almost forgotten past.

But Daisy was not thinking of the past. She was not thinking at all. Her heart, swollen with shame and a violent sense of injury, visibly trembled the ugly checked gingham over her flat, little girl's breast. When her mother's door flew open again, she heard the hurried

frou-frou of skirts and her mother's voice, a shade self-conscious, controlled, calling: "Good-bye, Daisy—I'll be back soon." As if nothing had happened! Just as if nothing had happened—.

Then, presently, she heard the clop-clop, clop-clop of the big bay horse as he turned and swung off down the street and around the corner. Her mother—all pretty and gay and complete: All complete without her. Leaving her—here in the dark (it actually began to seem dark) alone.

Bitter tears welled up, swamping the image in the mirror. Slow, most miserable tears. She drooped her head, and somehow, through the mist, suddenly she saw, standing there between her meager toilet things, opposite a faded photograph of her father, the little picture of her mother in its blue and white enamel frame. Such a pretty colored picture done on glass! Bold, black diamond eyes, but somehow shadowed; soft lips just parted; soft bosom tenderly enshrouded in a mist of floating tulle. Even the burnished black hair, dimmed and dusted with photographer's powder.

Daisy's tears fell faster. She held her breath till her face turned crimson, then broke into wild sobbing. Oh, lying, hateful image—cruel, softly smiling face. . . . "Damn," she muttered under her breath, an unconscious echo of her mother, and, snatching up the picture, she flung it to the carpet and ground it to pieces beneath the same square heel which had blundered among the lace and chiffon flounces.

Leaving the débris there on the carpet in plain sight, she rushed into her closet, snatched up a hat, any hat, crammed it down on her head, stinging the elastic against her chin.

Daisy was on the warpath, a primitive little savage, setting forth to make wreckage, to do damage, to destroy.

Out upon the landing, she hopped astride the steep shining banisters, and skimmed, like a swooping hawk, downstairs, shooting clean off the end into a topsy-turvy heap upon the floor. But the mere skimming of a joint or jolt to the end of a spinal column were as nothing compared to the joy of spitting straight into the face of household law and order. And Daisy picked herself up grinning, with a shake like a puppy coming out of the water.

Leaving the front door wide open behind her, she tore down the front steps and headed at a run for a certain drug store on the corner of Chicago Avenue and Clark Street; for that precinct, forbidden to well brought up children, of saloons and pawnshops, dirty pavements, pool halls and lounging toughs; of cigar stores and wooden Indians; low disorderly frame buildings, redolent of something forbidden and secret; of something hideous and alluring, something which hoarsely whispered, even into the clean little ears of nice little girls, of lawlessness and vice.

Presently Daisy walked sedately into a smeary-windowed, greasy-floored drug store, and ordered herself, in a rather small voice, a chocolate ice-cream soda. The store was empty save for the clerk and two or three young bloods of the district lounging together at the back of the shop around the tobacco counter.

Two of her girl friends, early that spring, had skipped away to this forbidden district and come back with an odd aroma, alluring, forbidden, clinging to their afternoon's adventure. Walking south along Clark Street a group of men standing on the street corner had winked and called to the children as they passed by. And in the next block, from out of one of the saloons, a drunken woman had come reeling through the door of the "family entrance," screaming, or rather howling at the top of her voice, hat-

less, hair hanging, the waist of her dress unbuttoned down the front. "Drunken *men*, yes—who hadn't seen one? But a woman drunk!" That was something entirely different; fascinating, nauseating, to a child, as the sight of a cripple or maybe the glimpse of a dead dog, horribly still and forlorn, left in some back alley. And when a crowd gathered, grinning, jeering, and a policeman came striding, club in hand, the children had taken to their heels and run off back home, tingling with excitement and delicious nightmare fear.

Daisy toyed with her soda; that is, were it possible for a hot and thirsty little girl to trifle with a chocolate ice-cream soda, Daisy trifled with hers. She gazed at her reflection in the big, fly-specked mirror opposite and admired the gestures of her slender hand, as it manipulated the long spoon. She crooked her little finger. Mrs. Shawn always said it was common to curl your little finger. But Daisy knew lots of ladies who did, just the same. In fact, her own eager-eyed image so fascinated her that a mounted spoonful of ice-cream negligently applied fell and smeared upon the front of her green and brown checked gingham dress. Daisy snatched at it with a tissue napkin as she might at an escaping beetle, and glanced nervously at the lounging group by the cigar counter. But nobody had observed her. Even the drug clerk in his soiled white jacket had evidently forgotten her presence, for he had again joined the others and, one foot on the rung of the chair, his back turned, was engaged in an interesting discussion of the odds on the favorite for Washington Park's big derby day.

Too timid to call, or otherwise attract attention, Daisy left a dime beside her glass and skipped outside. She looked up and she looked down the sordid street. But save for a general aspect of mute and significant dirt and

disorder, nothing of interest attracted her attention. Relieved, yet reluctant, she retraced her steps, dangling her hat by its elastic. Well, the soda had been kind of thin, she thought. She would come again though some time. Maybe after dark. But now, what next? Should she go back and walk downtown; right over the Clark Street bridge? There were lots of saloons down there—and dime museums. One advertised a mermaid, naked to the waist. She had seen the poster one day from their carriage out shopping with her mother. But she hadn't any more money and it was awfully far. It was getting awfully hot.

Then it popped right into her head. Why, sell lemonade—of all things, of course—sell lemonade. Sell lemonade! Only last week, her mother had forbidden her even to “dare to *dream*” of such a thing—a favorite expression of Mrs. Shawn's. “Well, Liz Hennessy's mother lets her,” Daisy had argued.

“*Liz Hennessy!* Shanty Irish Catholics! *Her* father keeps a saloon. She *would* sell drinks. How often have I told you not to play . . .”

“Well, Greta has a flower stand,” Daisy interrupted.

“Greta who?”

“Schultz—they live on Ontario Street, over by the lake—she's my best friend.”

“Oh, she is, is she? Old man Schultz runs a chain of pie stores. I don't know why you always take naturally to common children like that. I don't see why you always want to make a mick of yourself when I try so hard to make you into a lady,” cried Mrs. Shawn and slammed the door of her bedroom violently behind her.

“Lemonade—five cents—in the shade!” Daisy smiled up shyly, mischievously—at her prospective customer. “It's lovely and cold,” she said, and ran a finger across the

damp accumulated outside the white pitcher. The large perspiring woman who had paused there, irresolute, on the sidewalk, suddenly dumped a parcel of dress goods, a net-covered basket of grapes, and some smaller packages on the wooden table and sighed with a relief. The little girl raised the heavy white pitcher and filled one of the empty jelly glasses. Her thin elbows, below the short gingham sleeves, stuck out at right angles.

The Irish waitress and the German cook, from the basement kitchen in the Shawn's brownstone and brick house to one side of the wide yard, watched the proceedings over their cup of afternoon coffee.

"De kid'll catch ud when *she* comes home," said the one.

"Wheniver that may be," said the other, helping herself largely to cream. "*She* was a hour late for supper last night—an' her after tellin' us to have supper half an hour early."

Daisy's mother forbade coffee served in the kitchen between meals. Sometimes she forgot to say so; but this she considered, nevertheless, one of the rigid rules of the house. But as she was out of the house most of the day, and had no head for detail, her servants indulged themselves quite regularly. Servants never stayed long with Mrs. Shawn anyway.

The large woman outside on the sidewalk drank slowly and continued to perspire. "My, you've got pretty lilacs and snowballs in your yard," she said finally, wiping her mouth on the back of her black cotton mit. "An' your lawn's kep' up fine. You live here?"

Daisy smiled and nodded brightly, shyly.

"You live here," the woman repeated, "in that nice house? Guess you support the family."

Daisy tittered rather affectedly, seeking to make herself

agreeable. Her customer, chuckling to herself, leaned sideways and began to search for her placket hole, and in due course of time produced a leather, nickel-clasped purse, and started to turn over the loose change.

"Only got four pennies and some dimes," she announced finally, and capturing a ten-cent piece between her heavy fingers, she placed it carefully on the table. The child picked it up and put it in her pocket.

"Thank you," she said. Daisy's shy, excited little face looked up. Dark eyes,—speaking eyes, looking up under a straight bang of honey-colored hair. The large, flushed face bent down, and they stood there smiling. Quite a pause. Vaguely the little girl felt apprehensive. Something. . . . Then the woman shifted her weight and began to pick up her bundles.

"Well—don't I get no change?" she inquired, chuckling.

A blush, like the leap of a flame, flashed into Daisy's face. The excitable eyes opened and shut tight—opened again.

"Oh," she cried, gasping, "Oh—I never thought. Oh—just wait. I'll run and get change in the kitchen."

The woman watched the thin, black-stockinged legs race across the green lawn. "My," she thought, "that's an awful nervous child." And then to herself, with maternal prescience: "Shouldn't wonder they don't handle her just right."

A little later in the afternoon, close to five o'clock, a one-horsed victoria turned the corner from Rush Street, passed the lawn where Daisy was standing behind her lemonade table, and drew up in front of the brownstone and brick house to one side. Engaged in fishing a swimming fly, with one finger, from the contents of her pitcher,

Daisy had not seen the carriage until it passed into her immediate range of vision. She threw one fleeting glance at the two elegantly poised occupants, her mother and a charming looking stranger, engaged in bright conversation under their sunshades. Then, literally stiffening her backbone, she resolved once more (for she had thought it out beforehand) to stand her ground and let come the deluge. But there they paused, her mother and the strange lady in the carriage, oblivious of her presence, evidently in no hurry, while the big bay horse fretted and sweated against his check rein, frantically switching at the flies on his flanks with the ineffectual stump of his tail.

"Daisy—Daisy . . . Come here, darling." The ladies had alighted and were advancing, light skirts trailing, billowing, ruffled sunshades fluttering across the wide, green lawn. Daisy tightened her grip on the edge of the table and stood rigid, save for one quick, sullen glance from over her shoulder. But her lips moved. "I just hate her—I just hate her—I hate her." She clamped her mind to stem the tide of ebbing resolution.

Mrs. Shawn turned to her companion. "My little girl is terribly shy," she whispered confidentially, smiling, but with a frosty glint in her starry eyes.

"Of course—at that age," Mrs. Shawn's guest murmured agreeably. She was rather older than Mrs. Shawn, exceedingly well dressed in gray and mauve striped chiffon. Her broad, commonplace face managed somehow to look charming under a little toque of crushed-together violets. Her only distinguishing features were her ears. Thoroughbred ears; small, complacent ears; self-sufficient ears, pierced through their delicate lobes by the clasps of two large pearls. Ears from which the hair, beautifully planted, waved back in surety and pride. She had, too,

from Daisy's point of view, a slightly foreign allure—Daisy felt it at once, obscurely.

They were quite close by now, and Mrs. Shawn turned and whispered again. "Evidently she has been playing at store. Killingly funny, children at that age—aren't they? One of the few advantages of living here in Chicago—it's just a country town, you see. Imagine, Mrs. Rutherford, little girls selling lemonade in their front yards—gardens . . . on Fifth Avenue!"

Mrs. Rutherford laughed pleasantly. Her attention was attracted to the graceful little girl whose eyes, when she raised them and smiled, were so filled with nervous apprehension. She bent down as impulsively as the cruel pinch of her corset permitted her, and with a sheltering gesture drew the child's yielding figure close to her side. "May I have a glass of your lemonade, my dear?" she asked. "I'm terribly thirsty."

"Daisy, run and tell one of the maids to bring out two chairs from the drawing room," Mrs. Shawn cried out, all smiles and charm again.

"Drawing room—drawing room—that's a new one, all right," Daisy commented privately, and as she lifted the heavy pitcher, she caught again the artificial inflection in her mother's voice and cocked her head impudently a shade to one side.

Next moment Mrs. Shawn contradicted herself, in her own bright, buoyant way. "No—no—let's sit here on the bench instead, Mrs. Rutherford . . . here, by the lilac bushes. There's no wind to-day; it can't be very dusty." She had caught a glimpse of the Swedish waitress through the open kitchen window, capless, rather mussed as to hair, staring at the group on the lawn with remorseless Nordic eyes from over a tilted coffee cup. Daisy spilled a little of the lemonade as she walked with it, a glass in each

hand, across to the two ladies, seated billowy, wasp-waisted, on the low wooden bench. She colored and a tiny tremor shot across one cheek as she served Mrs. Rutherford. "I hope it isn't too sweet," she said.

"Oh, my dear . . . I know it's just right." Mrs. Rutherford's rather expressionless face looked suddenly gentle and affectionate. "I'm afraid—this is terrible—I haven't any change!"

"Would you like to charge it!" Daisy replied timidly, mischievously, and blushing all over again.

"Oh, you darling child." Mrs. Rutherford caught Daisy's hand, and turning to Mrs. Shawn, she half whispered: "Fascinating—simply fascinating."

Daisy heard her, closed her eyes and thrilled with pleasure.

"But don't you think she looks a little" (she raised her eyebrows and lowered her voice again) "delicate? Of course, she's just reaching the age? Why don't you both come to New York this autumn? We have such wonderful child specialists in New York." Mrs. Rutherford rose to her feet and gazed abstractedly at a wet spot on her gray suede glove. She was a naturally kind woman. Everybody said so. And she had taken a fancy to Mrs. Shawn instantly when she had met her, for the first time, at lunch that day. A real beauty, but a *real* beauty! And spontaneous and amusing. She liked the vivid sparkle of her manner and the naturally deep contralto voice, which excepting for an occasional burr-er-er-r was not in the least Chicagoese. And although Mrs. Rutherford had penetrated at once Mrs. Shawn's sharp anxiety to please, she was so accustomed to people anxious to please that she accepted Mrs. Shawn's faint subservience of manner as only natural under the circumstances. Besides, Mrs. Rutherford liked to think of herself as free from preju-

dice about social matters, as a great lady, in short, who could afford her caprices; as vaguely Bohemian. She stood there, smiling, rubbing with her little handkerchief at the spot of lemonade on her suede glove, feeling herself at ease, benevolent, amused.

"Do come—in November," she repeated. "I probably will have to go straight through on my way back from Colorado Springs."

Mrs. Shawn's black diamond eyes opened wide, and the long lashes showed like tiny pen strokes against the smooth pale skin. "Oh, how I wish we could," she cried, all her charm surging, sparkling, dimpling. "It would be wonderful for Daisy too—but . . ."

"I'd love to have you meet some of my friends—some of my men friends—I have several who are perfectly charming and unattached . . . one in particular, Oliver Redmond. He's going to be appointed Ambassador to Austria or Russia, they say. You must come on to New York, really, and look me up as soon as you arrive."

"Oh, really, you are too kind, Mrs. Rutherford."

"I'll drop you a line in the autumn."

Mrs. Rutherford was moving, easily but very erect, across the lawn, Daisy's hand once more in hers, Mrs. Shawn at her side. "My dear—really—you are still so young and so very good-looking," she continued with benevolent persistence. "You can't go on forever living alone. Now is the time, my dear!" They reached the gate, and Mrs. Rutherford, without moving a finger, permitted Susan Shawn to take a step forward and open it for her. "No, not alone . . . and not in Chicago," she added, with an airy little laugh as she stepped into the victoria which had waited to drive her back to the Virginia Hotel.

As the carriage swung around at the turn, Mrs. Shawn noted the elegant angle of Mrs. Rutherford's posture. Dis-

tinguished, remote, somehow. Slender feet resting precisely upon the leather cushion. "Like royalty," she thought, as Mrs. Rutherford nodded her head and raised her sunshade. "She just smiles slightly, without looking at you, like the Princess of Wales."

"My! she's lovely! Even if she is a swell from New York," said Daisy, seeking to continue her mother's thoughts in any direction divergent from the lemonade stand, for she felt in a very pleasant mood herself, and all the fight had gone out of her.

"Don't say, 'Noo York!'" Mrs. Shawn corrected. "And whatever possessed you to sell lemonade, after all I've said to you? That's direct disobedience—and so terribly common! What do you suppose Mrs. Rutherford . . ."

From long and often painful experience, Daisy was able to gauge her mother's moods to a nicety, and she felt now that her mother was not really angry, that she was scolding rather from habit than from conviction. Mrs. Rutherford, like a fairy godmother, she felt clearly, had somehow saved the situation for her.

"Well, Mrs. Rutherford thought it was cute," she interrupted, pursuing her instinctive line of defense. "I know she did. She's just like everybody anyhow. She wiped her mouth with her finger and got a spot on her glove. And her dress was stained a little under the arms."

Daisy knew intuitively that her mother would not be averse to these homely observations. As they walked back together amiably across the lawn, Mrs. Shawn picked up another train of thought.

"Daisy, you've such an ugly accent lately—playing with that Hennessy child. Her father says 'I seen' and 'I done'—Irish mick! You spoke so prettily when we got back from England last year. I tell you what I'll do: I'll

give you a cent every time you say 'cawn't' and 'shawn't' and fine you a cent every time you forget and say 'cayn't' and 'shayn't.' How does that strike you?" Mrs. Shawn concluded, smiling and twirling her parasol over her shoulder. She was in high good humor.

"Well—it doesn't strike me awfully well," Daisy retorted, beginning to look sulky again. "You cayn't remember half the time yourself——"

"Oh, goodness—you're starting to get impudent again." Mrs. Shawn looked away absently, up the street. She wanted to be alone with her thoughts and the excitement of her new plans. "Run along, Daisy. I've got a little headache."

And Daisy, thinking of the crushed glass photograph lying for the whole world to see, right on the carpet in her bedroom, raced off into the house and upstairs. Her mother wouldn't miss it for days, maybe weeks, she reasoned . . . and by then she could fix up something. Get out of it somehow. "Give me time," she thought, "it's funny—but I can always get ahead of mamma."

After that flying visit of Mrs. Rutherford's through Chicago, Mrs. Shawn became more and more irksome, it seemed to Daisy, with her continual innovations and amendments of household rules and the conduct of private life. Innovations and amendments, passionately emphasized one day, only to be forgotten the next. Daisy was ordered, for instance, to take her "cold tub" now, every single morning without exception. Daisy understood, of course, that her mother did not actually mean *cold* water; or that if she did, she would not trouble to walk upstairs and put her finger in the tin bathtub used by Daisy, on the third floor, to verify the temperature. There were only two tubs in the house and none for the servants, it being

understood, although never discussed, that the maids might employ the laundry tubs, high-perched and square, upon occasions. But Mrs. Shawn did seem quite in earnest when she told Daisy that she was old enough to bathe every day now—a big girl going on fourteen! “Every decent well brought up child in England takes a bath every single day,” she had said. “Well—they only have to sit in little, shallow tubs,—about one inch of water. I bet they don’t wash all over,” Daisy argued.

“Yes, they do—they *scrub*.”

“Well, you don’t take a bath every day yourself,” countered Daisy, suddenly inspired.

“How dare you say such a thing! Oh, sometimes when I have a cold or aren’t well—and I run the water late when you don’t hear me.”

“There’s no hot water at night.”

Mrs. Shawn’s eyes blazed. She took a violent step forward, but Daisy, laughing hysterically, dodged past her and ran out of the room.

Although Mrs. Shawn invariably had the fresh appearance of a sparkling May morning, she was in truth none too punctilious in matters of the toilette. Moreover, she had a *penchant* for bathing her face in sour cream, a habit disgusting to Daisy but much in vogue at the time, when cosmetics were something of a rarity. However, quite persistently, after this episode, Mrs. Shawn shooed the reluctant Daisy upstairs and listened below for the sound of running water; that is, on the mornings when she happened to wake on time.

About the beginning of November, Mrs. Shawn read in a tale by Kipling about an exiled lordling, who dressed every night for dinner in his solitary outpost somewhere in the heart of a tiger-infested Indian Jungle, and she ordered Daisy to change for the evening meal, even on

those nights when, she, Mrs. Shawn, was dining out and Daisy ate supper alone on a tray.

"Civilized people dress for dinner," she had said, speaking with the restrained modulation of tone she was beginning to cultivate. "But we don't have real dinner even when you're home like tonight—first night in a week," Daisy argued. "Just cold meat and biscuits and berries—that's supper."

"Salad . . ." Mrs. Shawn retorted.

"But no soup—I read it in the paper—no soup means supper." Daisy was feeling hot and ridiculous in her last winter's pink silk party frock. Across the table Mrs. Shawn, dressed in a discarded black lace dinner gown, was already looking forward with considerable impatience to the taking off of her stays.

"Did papa dress for dinner?" Daisy persisted.

"Oh, your poor father . . ." Mrs. Shawn interrupted herself suddenly for she felt her temper beginning to rise. "Daisy, take your finger off the bowl of your spoon—and use both a fork and a spoon when you're eating dessert . . . the sweet, I mean. English people hold their knives and forks and spoons this way—way back on the handle. Daisy, look!"

But Daisy dropped her spoon with a clatter on her plate. "Well, I guess it's too much trouble to eat at all these days," she said, chin trembling as if she were about to cry, and planting both elbows on the table she ran her fingers nervously through her hair.

Mrs. Shawn pushed back from the table, and her deep voice forgot its recent melody. "Daisy Shawn—how often have I told you not to touch your hair at the table! It's a nasty, common trick! Harriet Beecher Stowe had dinner with a Duchess in England and she fixed some hairpins in her braids at the table. Do you know what the people

thought of her? I told you before, you remember. And will you, or will you not, sit up straight? Children are not supposed to touch the back of their chairs."

"Well, what would you want her to do," replied Daisy, mechanically straightening her back but looking extremely unpleasant, "let her braid fall off in the soup? Besides, I'm just sick and tired of hearing what English people do. Aren't we Americans?"

"The British aristocracy have set the standards of decent living for the world," Mrs. Shawn replied, once more in low and cultured tones, which carried, however, an edgy ominous tremble.

But that was, for the time being, the last of their formal evening toilette. Not that Daisy, personally, had influenced her mother or carried her point. Only the succeeding evening Mrs. Shawn had an engagement for the theater and a late supper, and elected to take a bite early in her wrapper and upstairs from a tray. And the very next morning Mrs. Shawn received a formal invitation to dine with Mrs. Rutherford the end of the following week in New York. On the margin of the engraved card Mrs. Rutherford had written in her own hand—such a careless, scrawly writing—"Do come! And bring your darling little girl into tea some day."

Mrs. Shawn decided without hesitation to accept, for herself, that is. But Daisy would be better off at home. She would explain to Mrs. Rutherford that the child caught a bad cold just before leaving. As a matter of fact Daisy invariably did get sick one way or another, traveling. And Hannah, the housemaid, would take perfect care of her. Hannah had been a child's nurse in her youth, and Daisy was devoted to her, and she would remember to leave two or three addresses of doctors, in case something should happen. It didn't look just right maybe, but what

else could she do as she couldn't afford the expense of a maid traveling? Hotels were no place for children anyhow. If she took Daisy along, she would be obliged to leave her entirely alone shut up in the hotel a great part of the time while she was out lunching or dining or at the theater with her friends. It wasn't practical.

So Mrs. Shawn departed alone for ten days to New York, leaving Daisy in charge of the recently acquired but alert and competent Hannah. "Oh—just to do a little shopping," she told her friends. "And I have two or three engagements—I'm dining with Mrs. Rutherford on the sixteenth." Although well she knew this last tidbit might well be credited to obvious bad taste, still she reasoned it carried in itself an importance which could not be denied.

About noon of the day of her departure, Mrs. Shawn drove down to Field's to buy an extra traveling bag. But she dallied by the glove counter and returned again from the street for a pair of stockings and a long, floating brown chiffon veil. It was past two o'clock when her cab pulled up by the curb in front of her house. A most singular sight confronted her gaze: Daisy, ghastly pale, her long legs hunched up, lying back in the double baby carriage which belonged to the Hennessy twins next door. The maid, Hannah, hat askew, brick-red as to face, had tight hold of the handle bars. Evidently she had spied Mrs. Shawn's hansom cab making the curve from Rush Street and stopped in midflight across the lawn to the kitchen entrance to wait for it. Mrs. Shawn jumped to the ground before the horse had come fairly to a standstill. As she ran across the lawn toward the astonishing pair she might have observed a kind of grim accusation emanating from every line of Hannah's face and figure.

Daisy lay back, speechless, very limp. After a rattle of

strident questions and answers between Mrs. Shawn and Hannah, "Serves you right," interrupted Mrs. Shawn, eyes intensely black, shining, wide. She still clutched her parcels and had not as yet made a gesture toward the child.

"Daisy was climbing the back fence. She had a fut on a long, rusty nail," Hannah went on at the top of her voice, her chin trembling convulsively as she neared the climax of the story, "and one fut in the air." The three, Hannah wheeling, had turned and were walking slowly toward the low kitchen entrance. "An' the nail come within nothin' of the arthery. She bled two solid basinfuls—an' all over the floor—she'd of died right here if I hadn't be-thought me of the twins' carriage and run with her ivery stip of the way to the doctor's. He took twelve stitches in her leg. It's right up by the groin . . ."

"What did the doctor *say*?" Mrs. Shawn interrupted. She could not help thinking uneasily of her trip to New York. It was but a few hours now before train time.

"Why, he do say she's all right—perfekcly all right—she's got to stay in bed though, a full week. If you are lavin' for New York today," the quick-witted Hannah paused for an answer, just a shade contemptuous, while Mrs. Shawn glanced away and nodded her head. She might delay a few days. But what of the ruby velvet she had planned to have Donovan make for Mrs. Rutherford's dinner and whoever heard of Donovan's rushing anything through?

"I'll take the best of care of Daisy. Me an' her's the best of friends—ain't we, darlin'?" said Hannah, looking forward to a fortnight of domestic liberty.

"I never liked any of our girls as much as Hannah," Daisy said languidly, looking at her mother.

"Don't say 'girls,' say 'maids'," Mrs. Shawn took one

of Daisy's hands in her own and smiling gave it a little squeeze—to make up for the reproof which perhaps was rather out of place. They had reached the kitchen by now. Mrs. Shawn helped Bridget with the perambulator.

Conventional, like all children, Daisy felt vaguely hurt because her mother, by leaving her, was doing the irregular thing. But she was too tired and weak to feel keenly. Besides, she also was not averse to a holiday alone with Hannah. Cozy, warm, peaceful days, glamorous with tales of murder, and wailing ghosts, sitting in the kitchen; "piecing" between meals.

Hannah carried Daisy upstairs in her arms, while Mrs. Shawn helped with the child's long legs. Presently, she lay propped up in her mother's bed, contentedly, drinking a glass of milk and nibbling at a gingersnap. Mrs. Shawn sat down beside her daughter and passed an arm beneath the slight shoulders.

"Really—I feel badly about leaving you, darling," she said, a hint of shyness, a trace of emotion in her voice.

"Oh, that's all right, mamma." Daisy smiled and dropped her eyes. But underneath the coverlet her nails dug deep into the palms of her hands. A queer, sweet, yearning regret, hovered for a moment between these two. Then Mrs. Shawn turned away, nervous, irritable, to continue her packing. Although she arranged her articles neatly in her traveling bag, she did not hesitate to wrap her hair brush and comb and toothbrush and powder in bits of newspaper.

Toward five o'clock, gloved, veiled, Mrs. Shawn stooped and kissed her daughter good-bye, then straightened up and hesitated. She opened her purse and placed a silver dollar on the table by the bed. "Here's a silver dollar to buy anything you like with."

"Oh, mamma!"

"Sure nothing hurts you, Daisy?"

Daisy gallantly shook her head.

Mrs. Shawn lingered on. She felt uneasy, a little sore, apprehensive. "Well, here's another dollar then. Be a good girl." And without looking at Daisy, smiling, she opened her purse again and half forced the second coin into Daisy's hand, closing the child's fingers around it. Daisy flushed painfully. She kept her eyes tight shut when her mother kissed her again, but when Mrs. Shawn finally turned to go, she stretched out her arm and caught her dress.

"Mamma, listen—I want to ask you something."

"Well, what is it?" A pause. Mrs. Shawn glanced at the clock. "Hurry, dear—it's very late."

"Mamma—you know you always make me read the Bible—a chapter a night—But I don't always do it, though."

Mrs. Shawn's deep voice took on a sharper edge as she replied: "Well, you don't have to when you're sick."

"All right. I wanted to ask you—mamma—what is a womb? A w-o-m-b. The Bible says it the whole time. What is it, really, mamma?"

Mrs. Shawn gave a little snatch at her dress and stepped aside. "I don't know—don't know, my dear. Never heard of such a thing. What nonsense!"

"Mamma, will you bring me a dog? I've always wanted a dog so awfully bad."

"Good-bye, darling—write every day—every single day. Hotel Hanover—don't forget. I'll bring you a lovely present." And Mrs. Shawn, who did not feel that she could argue with Daisy under the circumstances, snatched up her little handbag and ran, calling good-bye, with a flurry of skirts, and a parting kiss thrown from the doorway which might have promised anything.

Mrs. Shawn returned from New York with several handsome gifts for Daisy. A Sunday costume for the winter, which included coat, dress and hat, and also a gray astrakhan muff to match. But Daisy, like most children, was always somewhat suspicious of the "useful" variety of gift, and not having attained as yet the age of sex consciousness, she cared very little for clothes. She exclaimed politely, however, and busied herself inspecting the dashing signature of the maker, "Thurn," inside the coat collar, to hide her disappointment. She had been hoping against hope, when her mother referred in her letters to a present, that she would bring her something alive. If not a dog, a bird maybe. After some delay, Mrs. Shawn, with an intangible change of manner, laid a very large, long, package down upon the bed. "Mr. Redmond sent you this," she said. "Such a charming man. A real swell"—she added laughing, and humming to herself she passed for a moment out of the room.

When she returned Daisy had cut open the strings and undone the wrappings. A large, French, beautifully dressed doll, with eyes that opened and shut, disclosed its radiant presence. Daisy, hanging over the brass rail, at the foot, lifted her shoulders and curled her lip. "Did your friend think I'm three?" she inquired. And then, with one of her unpleasant, intuitive flashes, she added: "Maybe you didn't tell him your baby girl is going on fourteen? Well, thank you *ever* so much, mamma. It was just sweet of you to bring me these lovely presents. I guess now I have to go out and play." And snatching up her hat and cape, she skipped out of the room.

Mrs. Shawn felt hurt. Very often Daisy hurt her. She did everything in the world for the child—everything. Why, this winter costume and hat and muff had cost, altogether, well over one hundred dollars. And she could

ill afford it. "I give everything and get nothing . . . not even gratitude. . . . Ill tempered, impudent child, not even going to be pretty," she reflected bitterly, feeling at the same time an inward fearsome drag, as if she had committed a small sacrilege. She considered again the time and trouble spent over that winter costume. All those bunglesome parcels for Daisy arriving at the last moment to carry right with her on the train. And how efficient Oliver Redmond had been at the station, turning up unexpectedly, to see her off!

"I won't bring you flowers just to wilt and get in your way," he had said, "but here's a little tea basket. I've never spent a night on the train in *this* country." Mrs. Shawn thrilled with all that his speech implied, "But I imagine on such a long journey, you should carry along a tea basket—unless you have one already. It won't make too much hand luggage for you?"

"Luggage, he says luggage—not baggage . . ." Mrs. Shawn sparkled, shook her head. The waterproof covering was remarkably smart. The basket itself must have come from Bond Street. How delightfully ignorant and absurd of him. British. Chic. Did he really imagine her brewing tea in a Pullman section! When he bent down to her and sought to catch her eyes with his own, gone suddenly a trifle misty, she thought that never before had she beheld so distinguished a countenance.

Mrs. Shawn met Oliver Redmond for the first time on this trip to New York, at Mrs. Rutherford's, where she had been placed next to him at table. He had been instantly struck, and all of a heap, as it were, by her entrance into the drawing room shortly before dinner, when most of the other guests were already assembled. A studied entrance, he had seen that at a glance. But wherever

had she learned it? She had advanced with serious eyes, and a faint, set smile; head up, hands together, clasped upon a little fan. Slowly—slowly; dragging her train of ruby velvet after her, as if it were heavily weighted. The effect was superb. But once in the room, as she turned with Mrs. Rutherford to be introduced to some of the other guests, she had pivoted rather clumsily, he thought and extended an over-eager hand. And Redmond, watching, felt indulgent, protective, and not a little concerned over this lovely and still uncertain creature from out of the far west.

"Mrs. Rutherford tells me," he began some time after they were seated, but interrupted himself to reject, with nice deliberation, a tiny terrapin bone upon his fork. He was appreciating the bold curves of Mrs. Shawn's throat and bosom, and he was thinking to himself that not since meeting the Duchess of Leicester had he seen so starry a creature.

"Mrs. Rutherford says . . .?" Mrs. Shawn prompted, sparkling, smiling, after a pause during which Redmond had quite forgotten what he started out to say. "Oh—yes—just before dinner Mrs. Rutherford was telling me that you have a most fascinating little girl." He sipped his sherry and glanced at her. "Only child?" he questioned, negligently, a moment later. So sure of himself, this man, with his solid shoulders and finely-constructed, ruddy face. And what of this flat, clipped accent, new to her ears? New Yorker? Not a trace of British to it. Just easy. Natural. How, and more especially why had he kept it so American? Flat a's. . . .

"Look like her mother?" She could feel the experienced gray eyes traveling from her rather large, finely-shaped hands, up her arms to her throat and face again. Cheeky, this man, certainly. But gay and reassuring, in spite of his

own immense self-confidence. A type rare enough, she reflected, west of the Alleghanies. . . .

"Oh, no—she's much more like——." She hesitated, drooped her eyelids, "Like her . . . poor father." And catching an indistinct, trailing exclamation, an indefinite accent of interrogation, she answered the unspoken question: "Yes, poor child—she scarcely remembers him. He died when she was a baby." Slowly she spread wide her fan and rested the tips of the black ostrich plumes against the velvety white of her bosom. "I have lived all these years quite alone," she said.

"Difficult to understand," smiled Redmond. "Put a little sherry—have you any left?—on your terrapin. It's a bit flat. It always is in this house, for some reason. Here, take some of mine."

He would know just how to order a dinner, she reflected, even to the wines. He would order with authority, even in the smartest restaurants of Europe. Mrs. Shawn was genuinely impressed. How many Chicago men knew how to order a dinner? Usually, sitting there gawky, embarrassed by the maitre d'hôtel, they were obliged to leave it to their wives.

Before they rose from the table Redmond had asked if he might drop in for tea next day, at the Hanover, where Mrs. Shawn was stopping. Mrs. Shawn had momentarily speculated as to whether she should take a small suite at the hotel, including a sitting room, for the occasion, but dismissed the idea as extravagant. Besides, the thought of entertaining an almost strange man in a room right next her bedroom and in a hotel, began to worry Mrs. Shawn as soon as it occurred to her. For all her vivid sparkle and warm responsiveness of manner, Mrs. Shawn's conventions were rigidly Victorian. As for the rather bold cut of her décolletage, Mrs. Shawn herself

seemed quite unaware of it. Her small-town sense of decorum forbade that quick, downward glance, that tell-tale fussing with laces, and adjustment of the shoulder strap, which constitutes, consciously or not, a quite special enticement. Like Venus rising from the sea, Mrs. Shawn appeared to be innocent of her own loveliness. No one there could know, not even Redmond himself could possibly guess, how long and how precisely, to the fraction of an inch, Mrs. Shawn and her dressmaker, Donovan, had calculated the treacherous line between poetic license and bad taste across the contours of her bosom. But it should be said that save in so far as it constituted her chief business asset, Susan took no personal pleasure and very little interest in her beauty.

It was decided then, after some discussion, that they should go for a drive next day, through Central Park, and stop at Mrs. Rutherford's later on the way back for tea. A theater party was also tentatively arranged for later on in the week.

During Mrs. Shawn's stay in New York, Redmond sent her his brougham nearly every day for her shopping. And he frequently stopped by the Hanover Hotel, in the late afternoon, for an hour or so in the little parlor which Mrs. Rutherford had persuaded her to take, in spite of her misgivings.

The night before Mrs. Shawn left New York to return home, Redmond sent up his name rather late after dinner. He was in full dress; a gardenia wilted in his buttonhole. His face was flushed. Evidently he had dined well. She thought surely he would "propose," partially, at least, if not completely. But he had merely tried violently to kiss her, and when she had as violently refused, he picked up his hat and left her.

But he had showed up at the station with the tea basket,

and just before the train pulled out he had murmured something, half lost in the noise of the engine's starting: "Surely somewhere, surely—maybe in Chicago—I will drop you a line," he had said.

Inspired by Mrs. Rutherford's new and gorgeous house in the forties on Fifth Avenue Mrs. Shawn imported to Chicago several new and most upsetting ideas on interior decoration. Also about that time she learned to speak of people's "houses" rather than of their "homes." But if Mrs. Shawn had no vast halls to hang with figured green and orange satin, she could indulge in a new emerald plush Grand Rapids davenport with bronze laurel wreath motif along its mahogany frame; and did. She bought too, a garlanded gilt standing lamp with a beaded shade and stood it behind the big brown leather-upholstered rocking chair. Everyone had said the chair was comfortable. Oliver Redmond would like it, too, if ever he came to Chicago (which, of course, he never would). All men did. Although she argued with herself against needless expenditure, for she came naturally, through Scotch parentage, by a frugal nature; guided by an instinct she would not for worlds have acknowledged even to herself, she bought a dozen large variegated cushions, and scattered them about the uncompromising surfaces of the new divan.

She discharged the devoted Hannah (Daisy sulked and wept for days) and engaged in her place a wise-looking, frizzy-haired French girl. She dressed her in a black alpaca costume with cap and apron so tiny and so chic that the girl looked as if she might, at any moment, break into a song and dance. She bought some exquisite house linen at Field's, something she had never possessed in quantity before; four solid silver candlesticks, and a flat

silver service from Spauldings. Then she hired by the month the big bay horse and small blue brougham (or victoria, weather permitting) which she had never used before excepting on special occasions. When the bills came in she was badly frightened, for she realized that she would have to nick, for the first time in her life, into her capital. But she clutched at the idea that while she was still young and beautiful, she should marshal all her forces.

She re-covered the old furniture, rearranged it, and continually pushed it about. Scarcely a day passed that Daisy's childish love for the static was not upset by radical changes in the house. And to cap the climax, Mrs. Shawn made an announcement more shocking to Daisy by far than anything which had preceded it since her mother's return home. Daisy was to have a governess for the winter. "All the little girls of the best families in the East have governesses," she said. "Besides, you are getting terribly slouchy and round-shouldered and sulky all the time. I'm ashamed of you when there's company. It's just one continual fight. And I'm not sure I'll let you walk around the streets alone any more," she added, beginning to raise that deep-wide voice of hers. "All the nice little girls in New York—you see them walking around with their governesses."

"I won't have a governess," Daisy broke out passionately, just as her mother expected. "I want to go to school with the other girls."

"Yes—and pick out all the commonest ones for your special friends. I don't see why, when . . ."

"I don't see why you can't let me alone—I don't want to be different. You're always trying to make me different. I want to be like other girls—I just want to be like other girls. I won't have a governess and walk arm in

arm and have everyone laugh at me. I won't—I won't—" and, bursting into wild weeping, Daisy fled out of the room.

Several weeks passed, however, and no governess materialized. Mrs. Shawn had stretched a point by saying that a governess was already engaged, as a short cut toward closing an argument. As Daisy might have foreseen, day by day her mother modified her plans. On second thought, what a bore, a strange woman hanging around, spying around their little house. And who was to carry her meals upstairs when they had company below. And she simply couldn't stand sitting down to table with her and forcing herself to make tiresome conversation when they were alone. And how to choose the nationality? French women had tricky minds . . . Germans, ugly table manners . . . English, well, they put on airs—an English governess would never fit into this unpretentious house of theirs, run by only three servants. And how to go about getting a governess? Through Mrs. Rutherford? Well, she didn't care to risk bothering Mrs. Rutherford with a downright chore of this kind.

A note arrived from Redmond the beginning of December which changed the entire course of her life, and of Daisy's as well. It assured Mrs. Shawn that she had inspired the writer with an irresistible desire to inspect the beauties and charm of his own country, about which he had never felt any special curiosity before, and that he expected to arrive in Chicago the first week in January. And he wrote further that he was leaving for Europe in the spring, adding something about a foreign embassy, in such an incredible cramped-up hand that she never would have been able to guess at his meaning had she not remembered something Mrs. Rutherford had said on the subject the first day she had met her in Chicago.

Mrs. Shawn spent a restless night, tossing about in her rumpled bed till dawn. As the light diffused itself finally between the heavy curtains she sat up, wide-awake. She felt hungry. She rose, lit the bedside candle, slipped into a more comfortable than aesthetic red flannel wrapper, which lay beside yesterday's folded underclothes. For unless she were going to a party Mrs. Shawn believed in keeping an eye on the washing. An icy December rain splashed against the windowpanes but the room was still fairly warm and rather stuffy. In accord with the customs of that earlier day, excepting in temperate weather, Mrs. Shawn always slept with the window closed.

She clippity-clopped, in a pair of worn leather slippers, down the hall, insensitive, in fact vaguely comforted by the noise she made: opened Daisy's door and stood there for a moment, candle in hand, looking across at the dim, slight form in bed. Disappointed, a tinge resentful at finding the child still so soundly sleeping, for the trip all alone downstairs into the blank black below, to the pantry, contracted her nerves, she pulled Daisy's door to with a willful thud, shocking the perfect stillness; and paused again, hoping vaguely to hear some stirring within. But Daisy, deeply asleep, made no sound. Holding tight to the banister, she descended, shrinking into the dark. In spite of her candle, each step felt as if it were made on the brink of empty space.

She groped about the chill, mute pantry. Only after both gas jets were lit, the ice-box opened and all its familiar contents on display did Mrs. Shawn relax and feel secure and familiar with her surroundings. Mrs. Shawn was possessed of a robust and indestructible appetite; a sound peasant health which gave to her beauty the luminous quality of ripe fruit. By the time she had finished two slices of ham, a piece of raisin cake, a gener-

ous helping of Canadian cheese, and a bottle of milk, that Celtic imagination of hers which all night had whirled loose like brilliant pin-wheels, images of crowned heads and palaces, of jewels and sables, carriages, footmen in livery, court balls, presentation dresses and who knows what other forms of pomp and splendor, dulled and fixed at last to its glowing core.

"I will marry Oliver Redmond—I can—I certainly will," she said out loud, and the curve of her pretty lips set in a stubborn line. "I'm sick of shabby houses and cheap servants, and fussing with bank accounts that don't come straight. I'm sick of being just beautiful and charming with nothing else to back me up. I want power. I want to sit still and hold the hoop—and make the others run in circles round me and do the jumping through. I'm a beauty. And I'm dead respectable. The way he looked at me at the hotel that last night in New York. My God—I'm glad I've got good sense." She ran her thumb-nail down between her brilliant front teeth to dislodge a raisin seed.

"Daisy will never be a beauty like me. Good-looking, maybe. Dark eyes and blond hair. My eyes have more expression though—'speaking eyes', Redmond said. But now her complexion is beginning to break out. Men never forgive a pimple. Well, of course, she's at the age . . . any day, now. When I was fourteen, though, I was so handsome mamma wouldn't let me walk down Main Street alone, the men stared so. My bust was developed like I was twenty-five. Well, I'm glad I've always been dead respectable. Redmond can't find out anything about *me* except that I was the wife of a dentist."

Of course she could make a rich marriage right in Chicago. Of course she could, if she really put her mind to it. But there lay, possibly, as a result of the secret

repugnances of her early married life, a finicky fastidiousness toward all men intimately suggested to her. One had damp hands, the other a roll of fat at the back of his collar, the third (but she could never have seriously considered him) pronounced "and" with a broad "a," was partial to the adjective "toothsome" and turned his toes out at right angles. None of the three was really rich, and marriage to any one of them meant a life sentence to Chicago. She told herself that even aside from his fortune and family connections Oliver Redmond was a fascinating man any woman might be proud to marry. How well he sat, stood, came into a room, used his hands, strong, muscular, well-kept hands,—gave his orders to the servants. How perfectly his street clothes fitted the short strong neck and broad shoulders.

By the end of her meal, for it amounted to that, it was almost clear daylight. She paused on her way upstairs between the brown plush portières of the living room, then crossed and opened the window, nostrils a-quiver, every sense antagonistically on edge. Evidently the waitress had forgotten to air the room after supper and before closing it for the night. From the dining room and pantry, from the kitchen below, from the new plush divan and the old plush hangings, emanated a close odor of people, of food, of general staleness. "Poor smell," she commented and her memory flashed back with bitter loathing to her first year with Jack Shawn: the smell of their one closet, packed to overflowing with outer garments of all descriptions, and with hats, boots, cardboard boxes, hanging underwear, cheap corsets. Sometimes an old stocking or an undershirt trailed for days behind the two shabby leather suit cases.

She mounted the stairs slowly, back to her bedroom; a superb figure in a shrunken red flannel wrapper.

"This is a jay town," she concluded, as she got back again into her rumpled bed. It's a jay town made for jay people. I'm a jay, too, I suppose. But I don't intend to stay one."

But on the morning of the very day she expected Oliver Redmond in Chicago, a telegram arrived, saying he was ill of the grippe. . . . And many regrets. . . . And he hoped his visit was merely postponed till spring. A dim hope indeed! She knew men, she told herself. If he didn't come right now, while the memory of her was vivid and warm he would never come to Chicago at all; and in this she was right. He never did come to Chicago.

Although flung to the depths by Redmond's telegram, Susan Shawn's tempestuous spirit flamed again, within the hour, to a reckless resolution. "I'll move out of this anyway," she cried, angry tears in her eyes. "Maybe it's all for the best—I needed more time to prepare for him. I'll sell this house the first chance I get . . . could have sold it long ago if I'd only had the gumption. I'll be ready next time with an upstairs sitting room, that new chintz stuff people use in England: soft chairs and soft lights and a door that shuts. If he *does* come in the spring—I'll be ready. But he won't come. I'll never see him again." She pulled his telegram out of the front of her bodice and read it through again. Each letter looked an inch high. Then she slipped it inside a larger envelope, scrawled "Bills" on the outside, and dropped it behind a tight wedge of books on a little hanging corner shelf; Susan had always had a peculiar penchant for hiding things.

Susan consulted with several real estate agents next day. Within the week, a rich old patriarch, a close-fisted Scotchman, who kept his growing family grouped close to the parental home on Rush Street just around the

corner, made an offer in the interest of a newly wedded son, for her house and grounds. Although the offer cut decidedly below Susan's expectations, yet the terms were cash down. Cautious in all money transactions to the point of timidity for all her reckless imaginings, Mrs. Shawn asked for a week to consider. And although during that time she turned the problem over and over, insincerely, like a cat playing with a bright marble, she had from the first definitely made up her mind.

Within three or four weeks' time, one of her young married friends told Mrs. Shawn that she planned to spend the winter in Georgia and was anxious to lease her house in the newly fashionable district near Lincoln Park for the six months she was gone. With what exquisite precision the component parts of the puzzle were slipping into place without a hitch, one by one!

And what a duck of a house! One of those ultra modern English basement houses. Two white stone steps almost flush with the sidewalk; narrow, cramped and smart. An upstairs sitting room. Curtains of flowered chintz. Porcelain bathtubs. A back yard barely sizable enough to flutter a few choice selections of underwear. No front yard. No lilacs, no snowball bushes. Two little starved trees set close to the street.

Daisy's life, after their migration northward, turned suddenly blank. For one thing, Mrs. Shawn neglected to enter her in the one fashionable school of the district until the quota was filled. She would yet hunt for a governess, she told herself. Later on, that is, when they were settled. But it was a frightfully complicated affair. And even supposing Daisy were to miss her schooling for a few months. Well, Daisy was a little too tall for her age anyhow. All that bending over books in stuffy rooms

wasn't any too good for a growing child. Better to let her run free for a while.

Run free! Although Daisy lived now less than two miles away from her old stamping ground, she might just as well, in so far as the break in her life was concerned, have moved to a different city. Mrs. Shawn began by skillfully blocking every attempt Daisy made to return for an afternoon to the old neighborhood. And when, against orders, she stole away southward along North State, to Rush, to Cass Street, and joined the gang for an afternoon's romp, she felt herself somehow already out of it. For Liz Hennessy, her dearest friend, was gone to a convent in Milwaukee for the winter. Greta Schultz's family had moved shortly after the Shawns, but in the opposite direction, down on the south side. Those of her old crowd who were left were going to school, occupied with new interests outside her range. As winter progressed, a feeling of helplessness, of hopelessness, settled close upon the child—the melancholy inertia of a painful adolescence.

In measure, as Mrs. Shawn's circle of acquaintances widened, in this new environment, her life at home became increasingly disrupted. And Daisy withdrew, day by day, further from actual contact with her. Sometimes, even when they were alone at table, Daisy apparently did not hear her mother's questions. Mrs. Shawn at first suspected her of willful inattention and punished her accordingly. But this inattention, accompanied as it was by an odd expression of dreamy vacancy, forced Mrs. Shawn to suspect Daisy's actual hearing. Several of the Shawns had been quite deaf, she reflected, and the child had inherited more than one of that family's unpleasant characteristics. Once or twice Mrs. Shawn repulsed a quivering suspicion of epilepsy. Sometimes she harbored a doubt

of tuberculosis. She must take the child down to Doctor Willing's for a thorough examination. In some unaccountable way Daisy seemed to have lost suddenly the edge of all her normal appetites. Well, lots of girls at just this age of puberty had bad complexions and moped around alone.

As a matter of fact the child was learning to withdraw from the world of actuality in which she had no real place—a world barren and uncomfortable—into a world of fantasy all her own.

Daisy developed a series of colds. Sometimes, for days, idle, alone, she fell into the habit of lounging about the house, staring vacantly out of the windows up and down the street. Or, hunched together for hours at a time, she devoured one of the outlawed volumes filched with guilty fingers from the little library's topmost shelf—*Wuthering Heights*; *The Three Musketeers*, which included a full page picture of d'Artagnan pulling the nightdress from Milady's branded shoulder; *Nana*; *Daudet's Sappho*, also elegantly illustrated; *Madam Bovary*; and the whole of *de Maupassant* done into English. Mrs. Shawn intended to be exceedingly strict on the subject of Daisy's reading. She recommended Scott and Dickens at all times and forbade the child to read *Vanity Fair* on Sunday. But sometimes Daisy locked her door at night, when she knew her mother to be out, and spreading some underclothes along the crack to conceal the light, read in bed until morning.

One afternoon Mrs. Shawn came running upstairs, bringing with her into the stuffy room a shock of fresh air from the snowy streets outside. She paused just inside the doorway, unpinned a bunch of violets and tossed them aside on a chair as she loosened her long, tight-fitting coat. Daisy looked up at her mother standing

there sparkling and vibrant, and a pang of helpless envy contracted her breast.

"For goodness' sake," cried Mrs. Shawn, "why don't you go out for a walk in the Park. It's the loveliest day. Isn't your cold well? What are you reading?"

Daisy arched her eyebrows and held out the first volume of David Copperfield.

"Well—that's all right. But get right up now. I want to see you go out for a long walk. Hurry, do as I tell you."

Daisy stretched languidly but made no movement to leave her seat. She was sitting on a copy of "Boule de Suif," and could not very well afford to rise. Presently she lifted her eyes and gazed straight at her mother. A cold, wise, defiant look passed between them; an odd look between mother and child.

"Mamma," she swallowed hard, "everything is for you here—I've got nothing at all. It isn't fair. I haven't anybody or anything any more." She hid her face in her hand as hot tears of self-pity welled up into her eyes. "Oh, I don't know what to do—I don't know where to go, mamma," she choked out, and longed to turn and cast herself weeping into her mother's arms. But some painful inversion—the grip of old inhibitions—lack of imagination—held Mrs. Shawn spellbound.

"Well, I can't help that," she answered finally in a voice so cold and flat she even surprised herself. "You never want to do what I want you to. It isn't my fault if you can't find anything to do by yourself. A great girl like you—I won't have you hanging around this hot, stuffy room now your cold is well. Your forehead is broken out. Nobody likes to look at little girls with bad complexions. People don't want them around."

Daisy bent down and fumbled with her shoe-laces till

she heard her mother leave the room. Vital, predatory as a glancing kingfisher, swooping always close above or close below the surface, insensitive save where her own vanity was concerned, Mrs. Shawn never divined that she had struck full into a secret, bitter wound. What should she know, Susan Shawn, whose own adolescence had been radiant as the dawn, of the hours of morbid self-abasement Daisy spent locked alone in her room, poring over her hand mirror or naked before the long pier glass, hating the sight of herself, thin-chested, skinny-legged, standing there.

"You are very undeveloped for a girl fourteen. Why, when I was your age I was almost like I am now," her mother had frequently told her. Mrs. Shawn felt, on the contrary, personally aggrieved. For here she was now with a great homely girl on her hands. A girl who, although without real beauty, had promised a great deal, with her honey-colored hair, dark velvety eyes, and camellia-white complexion. And now she was about to lose one of her chief assets, the almost pathetic translucence of her skin. But what Daisy's own reaction to this calamity might be Mrs. Shawn was unequipped for imagining.

About this time the first of the beauty columns appeared daily in one of the local newspapers. Daisy read them avidly. She bought a complexion brush and scrubbed the sensitive skin of her face until sometimes for days together she looked as if she had been excoriated. She tried too cutting off all sweets; and she came to know, too young, the relentless craving of suppressed appetite. Appetite which would not be denied. And in that close, empty world of hers she fought with herself battles grave and terrible: won them—lost them; lost them—won—over a bag of cocoanut creams or a box of luscious Allegetti

chocolates. Sometimes, after a week's fast, the dike of her young will would burst without warning and she would gorge herself with a pound of candy at one or two short sittings and eat until the sweets turned sour on her tongue. And bitterly she envied the girls (poor, humble-minded Daisy), earlier matured than she, who jostled each other around the soda fountains and candy counters and guzzled merrily, forgetting next moment even that they had been there. Happy, sparkling, pink and white girls, who wore corsets already and shields under their arms and got telegrams and violets during the holidays and whispered secrets apart to each other about their beaux.

On the first of May, Mrs. Shawn received a post card from the Ritz Hotel, Paris, saying: "Many thanks for steamer letter. Sorry you are not well. Why don't you join us? Paris is lovely. Oliver Redmond sends regards. Ever yours, Elizabeth Rutherford."

Next morning, Mrs. Shawn announced to Daisy that she was sailing the following Saturday for Cherbourg. She explained nothing. "I'll only be gone a few weeks," she said. "But what shall I do with you, Daisy?" A puckering of worry shadowed her classic brow.

"Oh, don't take me, mamma—please don't take me. I hate Europe and I get so sick on the ocean."

"I know you do. I was thinking of that. Of course, I'll only be gone a few weeks. Just for a little change. Goodness, we don't seem to have any relatives or anything."

Daisy's eyes shone suddenly with shrewd, secretive meaning. "I met Greta Schultz while I was waiting for you at Field's to-day," she interrupted, striving to control the excitement in her voice. "I know you think they are common, but they have the loveliest house in Kenilworth

—right on the lake—all added on to—darling and higgledy-piggledy.” She caught the look of concentrated attention on her mother’s face and paused to proceed, as if she had suddenly glimpsed heaven. “And it’s awfully healthy; they all go in swimming—and live out of doors and go to bed early.”

“Any boys?”

“No, they’re all girls at the Schultzes’.”

Regretting the words “higgledy-piggledy,” for they might create an impression of casual disorder, she quaked again for fear her mother would suddenly remember Oscar Schultz, Greta’s older brother. But then he was always away from home somewhere studying to be a doctor. You wouldn’t call him a boy, anyhow, exactly.

But the miraculous happened. Her mother sailed away alone and Daisy spent the summer by the lake with the noisy, warm-hearted, swarming Schultz family. She learned to dance, to ride, to swim, to eat heartily and to sleep without once turning over. Because she had a graceful body and a natural sense of rhythm, she took to the water, to horses, to tennis and to dancing, like a young bird taking to the wing, as if compelled by instinct.

And she fell in love with Oscar Schultz, a vigorous Northwestern medical student just coming of age. A stormy-browed lad with a sensitive, willful mouth, and broad, passionate nostrils. Having passed the rubicon at Carrie Watson’s during the preceding Christmas vacation, he was uninterested in young virgins and confined his attentions to handing Daisy an occasional dish at table.

One day the strap of Oscar Schultz’s bathing suit broke in the water. As he came up on shore Daisy spied one side of his muscular naked chest. After that, sitting be-

neath the trees, she began to strike dreamy attitudes, eyes drooping, her hand upon her cheeks; or when she saw Oscar walking toward the house across the lawn, she would comb out her long, beautiful hair, standing by the open window.

But although she and Greta sometimes stayed awake in their room till the birds began to twitter in the trees, guzzling chocolates and fruit and cake, and whispering first and last all they knew of life and love, Daisy never told anything of what she had seen that day when Oscar came up out of the water.

Mrs. Shawn deferred her return from week to week and from month to month. In her letters she avoided any announcement of definite plans until the first days of October, when Daisy received this cablegram from Paris: "Married Oliver Redmond to-day," it said. "He is appointed American Ambassador to Russia. Will send for you very soon. Love, Mamma."

But Daisy spent another happy, secure six months with the Schultzes. The impalpable blight which had chilled the child's natural development those last years with her mother melted in the sunshine of the warm-hearted, spontaneous, yet well-ordered German-American family. In the twelve months Daisy spent with the Schultzes she gained nearly twenty pounds.

"She is living with quiet, simple, but very respectable people in Chicago," Mrs. Oliver Redmond explained to her brand-new husband. "They're rather an ordinary lot, but she's going to a good school and they take good care of her health. That's the main thing; I always had to watch her health," sighed Mrs. Redmond, and, believing that she spoke the truth, she did not lie. "As soon as we settle down somewhere we'll send for her—

won't we, Oliver? And it will be soon enough, you'll think, I'm afraid. She's really quite a difficult child."

Christmas vacation with the Schultzes passed in a maelstrom of color, movement and excitement. Daisy went to her first real dance, to which some few college men and only the largest-sized school boys were invited. The party was given in the Schultzes' own house. The entire family helped the furnace-man to clear the furniture from the big front parlor, the library and dining room. Supper, brought in from the leading caterer's, was served under and upon the stairs. Wienhofer supplied the palms, Johnny Hard his band. It was quite a large affair, for now that Greta was coming along to "young ladyhood," Mrs. Schultz, in her own sweet way, had determined upon enlarging the circle of their acquaintance.

All afternoon Daisy prepared, with soap and brush and washcloth, perfume and powder, every inch of her body. She even shampooed her hair, although well she knew that slippery, freshly-washed hair was, of all things, most unbecoming. And while her hair was drying she sat down, cross-legged on the floor, to manicure her toe-nails, as if preparing for some sacred rite, as indeed, in a sense, she was. But for all her ecstasy of preparation, save for one only too brief and delicious incident, the evening turned out rather a failure. For the college "men," like Oscar Schultz, she wanted to dance with, did not care to waste time on awkwardly dressed school girls of sixteen. They preferred to devote themselves to the older girls home from Eastern finishing schools, and to a scattering of débutantes, who, for one reason or another, had condescended to put in an appearance that evening. And because she was quite tall, only a few of the very largest-sized school boys asked her to dance. Although she privately scorned them, hated their rumpled hair and

sticky hands, she accepted with alacrity for fear of being left stranded. But she watched the older girls' constant change of "men" partners from over her shoulder with greedy eyes.

When the band broke into the supper march, for girls like Daisy, who had no partners, the music sounded solemn, ominous, and slow. Everybody was leaving the front parlor where Daisy stood under a particularly large Wienhober palm, with two other girls, engaged in bright, exclusive conversation. A young man in full evening dress, with a small mustache, approached them from across the room. He bowed to the eldest of the three, the daughter of his boss in the hardware business. And almost at the same time the second girl was taken out, to her combined relief and mortification, by a portly middle-aged gentleman, a cousin of the Schultzes, who had promised Mr. Schultz to keep an eye out for the wall flowers during the evening. Daisy was left then standing entirely alone. She pinched her mouth into a fixed smile, and felt with horror that she might through sheer nervousness burst into tears, and, leaning against the wall, she turned away and pretended to tie up the ribbon strapping of her slipper. There she stood, pilloried, crucified with shame, while the room slowly emptied itself and the band played on, its solemn, ominous march music.

Oscar Schultz had also promised faithfully to watch out for all maidens in distress and, seeing Daisy drooping there, pretending to examine the ribbons of her slipper, he went across and offered her his arm. "Why, where have you been?" he said. "I've been looking for you everywhere." And because he saw that her little chin was trembling and she could not meet his eyes, he made his way with her to a sofa on the landing at the top of the stairs and took her fan and spread it

out upon the seat next to her. "So no one will come and take my place," he said, and he hurried back with two plates from the supper-table with something of everything piled upon them; for he was a kindly and imaginative young man, and Daisy's plight had really stirred his pity. He talked to her with great vigor and sincerity while they ate their salad and sandwiches, entirely about himself and his hopes and ambitions, and how he expected to finish his studies in Vienna, his mother's birth-place within the next two years and then come to Chicago to work his way up to be one of the world's great surgeons.

"Maybe if you go over there to be with your mother we'll meet there," he said.

"Oh, maybe—that would be wonderful."

"Mother will always know my address," he said. "I'm going to live with her sister, my Aunt Greta."

"Here is a real man," thought Daisy. "He talks about real things. About life. And about a real man's work in the world." And although after supper he did not dance with her, Daisy observed that he did not dance with any one at all, and disappeared upstairs long before the last guests went home.

Next day he had left for Northwestern before she was awake. But she never quite forgot the passionate relief his rescue afforded her, nor their talk about "real things" upon the landing of the stairs.

Toward spring Mr. and Mrs. Redmond sent a courier maid from France to fetch Daisy. When the final moment came for parting, Daisy threw her arms around Mrs. Schultz's dimpled neck and broke into tears.

"I've never been happy before. I'll never be happy again," she sobbed. "I wish, I wish, I wish you were my real mother."

But Daisy enjoyed her crossing and distressed her chaperone exceedingly by walking the decks till midnight with two young Englishmen, brothers, who sat near her at the captain's table. Although neither young man was eligible for true romance, for one wore the same wrinkling gray woolen socks three days running, while the other had an odd habit of scratching himself whenever and wherever the fancy seized him, yet they were both obviously gentlemen, younger sons of "a Lord," said her companion-maid, who had immediately ferreted out the fact. From earliest childhood Daisy had been impregnated with a respect for the British aristocracy which no rebellion against her mother's influence could utterly dispel. Daisy felt that for once her mother would approve her. They read aloud, played quoits, walked the deck, and ate together three large and three small meals a day. About the third day out Daisy had cause to speculate upon the inflexible grip of class discrimination after she had found an excuse, somehow, to tell the two young men that her new stepfather had just been appointed Ambassador to Russia. For from then on she felt an intangible change in their manner, and she wondered why sons of a "lord" should be snobs just like everyone else in the world. The last night out, leaning over the rail, the younger of the two, who stuttered at times quite painfully, suddenly enquired: "Will you m-m-marry me? I'm aw-awfully f-f-fond of you."

And Daisy slipped into her bunk that night feeling, for the first time in her life, replete and entirely self-satisfied. And thinking over and over the words of this her first proposal, she felt that she was at last like the other girls of her own age, like those merry-hearted, flouncing, round-breasted little girls who had caused her at one time so much bitter envy.

PART TWO

A DESOLATE rain shrouded the streets on the blighted, belated spring day Daisy arrived in Paris. Neither Susan Redmond nor Oliver could quite decide to leave their warm sitting room in the Hotel Brisdom, with its cozy grate fire, when the time came to put on their wraps and drive down to the station. Mrs. Redmond said she felt a cold coming on and Oliver suggested that the boat trains were generally late and they might have to hang around the dirty, damp station, maybe for hours. So they sent the porter, with "Hotel Brisdom" in plain gold letters printed on his cap, instead.

Daisy felt actually stiff with shyness and resentment when her mother greeted her on the threshold of their apartment. She had been humiliated, she felt, before her two new young English friends; for she had promised to introduce them to her beautiful young mother and her brand new Ambassador stepfather. She had told them repeatedly that both her parents would surely be on the platform to greet her. They waited, standing together until all the other passengers had left. But they waited in vain, for the hotel porter, who had not been notified till the last moment, came late. She had been bitterly disappointed. She thought her mother would be glad to invite the two young men ("Sons of a Lord") to escort her around Paris for the week they were to be there. She had planned it all out. Two beaux of her own, one of whom had certainly proposed to her. Like the other girls. She was proud of her find—her own find, and for once she had nothing to be ashamed of.

In her mother's embrace Daisy sensed something of cold restraint—some lack of warm spontaneity. But when she turned to shake hands with Oliver Redmond and looked into his ruddy face and shrewd but kindly eyes she took an instant liking to him.

"She's got great charm, your little Daisy," he confided to his wife later, when Daisy had gone across the hall to her own room. "Eyes and hair. And she's beautifully made. Of course, we'll have to lick her into shape this summer." "It takes an Oliver Redmond to talk common and get away with it," mused Mrs. Redmond, vaguely annoyed, she didn't know why.

"She'll have to study French three or four hours a day—whether she likes it or not," she said out loud.

"And German. It's all right for her to be a trifle gauche and a little shy," Oliver observed after a pause. "They prefer 'em that way over here. You'd better decide to bring her out this winter in St. Petersburg. It'll make the house attractive and gay . . . bring young people around."

Mrs. Redmond felt hurt that Oliver should not think her a sufficient attraction alone.

"She needs very careful dressing," she said, and putting up her hand to her hair she glanced across at herself in the mirror.

"I'll help if you like. Don't you think I have very good taste in clothes?" he asked, in his genial way.

"Why, yes, that would be lovely, Oliver, if you can't think of anything you'd rather do. She's not really pretty, you see. We'll have to be careful to bring out her fine points."

"Not so pretty as her mother!"

"No—not like her mother was."

Oliver glanced across at his wife. "Helen of Troy—

about the time she came back home," he thought, and like a prisoner filing with a tiny secret file, a still desire gnawed at the bondage of his marriage vows.

He rose and sauntered across to the window and stood there, thick-shouldered, vaguely smiling, hands in his pockets, looking down upon the whirlpool of traffic seething clamorously around the Place Vendôme, while Mrs. Redmond stared into the fire.

"Of course we could send her to England to school for another year or two. She's really too young to come out," said Mrs. Redmond presently. "Some girls are mature at sixteen. She's only just sixteen. (Mrs. Redmond habitually clipped off from a year to six months of Daisy's age.) And some are not. Daisy really doesn't know anything. She's just a child. But, on the other hand, you say your post will be a little uncertain after a year or so. Somebody else with more drag than you wants it, you say. . . . But I don't see that's any reason why they should get it. . . . Well, after all I guess it's a pity to miss the advantages of coming out in a big Embassy."

"Well, I don't know, as a matter of honest fact, if it is a real advantage. She won't learn anything that'll be any good to her—maybe fall in love with one of these thugs over here. They'll think she has a lot of money—whether she has or not. Though, as a matter of fact, I wouldn't mind settling something on her one day. She's really an appealing little thing. . . ."

Mrs. Redmond fell silent and gazed unwinkingly into the fire, seeming intent on her own thoughts, and Oliver, who, for so large and sanguine a creature, was surprisingly sensitive to atmosphere, feeling an intangible chill, fallen from he knew not where, left the room and sauntered across the hall to knock on Daisy's door and inquire if she were in need of anything.

The Oliver Redmonds (The American Ambassador to Russia and Mrs. Redmond, that is, and Miss Daisy Shawn) were delighted, to put it mildly, by a large, thick, ivory-smooth, engraved invitation to old Princess Catherine Molotzina's ball. True, the invitation was dated for the following evening—a last moment's thought evidently. But what a thought! Like a sweet message straight from heaven.

Those first two months, excepting for the court functions and a great ball given by the gay and still provocative Grand Duchess, Marie Pawlovna, to which naturally all the ranking diplomats were invited, the American Ambassador and his wife had but sparse opportunity to get fairly started in St. Petersburg society.

Between one huge court ball, a ballet given in the Emperor's private theater at the Hermitage, and a few large official receptions, the long blank spaces were dreary, irritating and oppressive. They had made no real friends. As yet they had no intimates, even in their own Embassy. Even among the other diplomats their acquaintance was most casual.

They had given two official dinners. Dreary affairs, although they might congratulate themselves that the second showed marked improvement over the first. In fact, a decided step up. One of the very highest State Ministers, two Court Chamberlains, a General attached to the personal suite of the Emperor, and several of the highest grade foreign Ambassadors with their wives, had been among their guests. But Mrs. Redmond was far from satisfied. Excepting for the wife of the French Ambassador, none of the really smart women of Petersburg society had come, although she had asked several. And her heart's core was set upon penetrating one day into that gay little inner circle of fashionable internationals,

that chosen butterfly flock who gather together and, closely incorporated, live as if at home in any one of the great capitals and pleasure places of Europe. For full privileged membership she knew that a woman should first be greatly born. She had also to be gifted with the rare talent for living, brightly, yet with a special wisdom and unfailing grace and charm. But there were occasional exceptions. And the romance of those exceptions having filtered through Oliver (who knew by heart every celebrated name in Europe) to Mrs. Redmond's ears, had fired her ambition to white heat.

Yet on the morning of the second dinner, the four people she cared most about had "dropped out," their three notes of flimsy excuse had arrived together—one from the Countess Nathalie Kavelin, one from her first cousin Count Dimitri Kavelin of the Chevalier Guards Regiment, and one from Countess Marietta Lichtenwald, and her husband, of the Austrian Embassy. All three notes were presented to her together on a silver tray as she came in from sleighing, and she had gone upstairs, locked herself in her room, and flung herself down on her bed with her bonnet on, to shed a few difficult and bitter tears.

"Here I am," she lamented, "rich and beautiful and an Ambassadors. And here I am still in the same place where I've always been—on the outside looking in. Oh, God—what *is* the matter?"

Save for occasional fits of depression which occurred after he had dined too many nights running alone with his family, when he threatened to resign from the Embassy and go back to civilization, Oliver Redmond was philosophically resigned to the dreary novitiate. "It takes time," he would say to his wife. "It takes time. You must expect that." And on another occasion, "We've got plenty

of money," he said. "And you are very handsome still. Yes, you are still a beautiful creature, my dear."

"*Still*" . . . "*Still*" . . . "You are very handsome *still*." The fatal word struck, like the first note of a dolorous knell.

"And dignified," he added with a sharp look as if in warning. "And I'm all right. And Daisy is getting prettier every day. Oh, yes, you are! But it's quite all right to blush and be girlish about it." They were all three sitting in Mrs. Redmond's bedroom. "I hate to leave this room—it's the only cozy room in the whole damn place." He rose to his feet and stood loitering by the door. "But I suppose I've got to go down to the chancery and attend to the dispatches. It's harder on you two here than on me, because I've always got my work, my inspiring work, my beloved work to do," and blowing a kiss to his wife, he winked from over his large shoulder gayly, at Daisy, as he closed the door behind him. He had always liked sitting about with women. First and last he had known a great many women intimately. Almost without exception—in fact, his wife Susan was the only notable exception—they had all been of the soft-mannered, soft-living, ultra-feminine type. He liked the chatter of women, he said, and their pottering about with brushes and little pincers and bottles and jars. He liked the frou-frou of petticoats; the atmosphere of eiderdown and ruffled pillows and things to eat on small haphazard trays. The bouffé of scent that came with the opening and shutting of satchet-lined wardrobes and dressing table drawers. "I guess my great-grandfather, the fur dealer, came from the Orient, all right," it amused him to explain, showing his sound teeth, in one of his fresh funny smiles. He could never adjust himself to Susan's frugal taste in underwear, nor to her Scotch contempt for frivolous super-

fluities. "Why don't you have little tables about, with pretty little things on them?" he asked one day. "And a day-bed with lots of pillows and trash around? It makes a room so cozy." In the end it was he who arranged his wife's bedroom and her boudoir, and he was so pleased to see how naturally Daisy sank among the down quilts and fragile cushions that he bought her a little pearl necklace for her birthday.

He had grown quite fond of the girl since his marriage, a year past. From the first he took a great interest in her lessons, particularly French and German; in her dancing and in her clothes. She was a natural dancer, he said, but he saw to it that she should learn the technique of the contre-dances then in vogue. Sometimes he and Mrs. Redmond helped to make up the four with Daisy and her dancing master. He insisted, too, that she should learn the mazurka, and he liked to watch her come skimming down the floor of their empty gold and crimson and mirrored ballroom, head up like an adolescent winged victory. With the amazing adaptability of young America, after the first few days Daisy accustomed herself to the enormous scale of their Gargantuan palace. But the six footmen in livery continued to disconcert her, for after all they were human beings though very strange, and she caught herself making conversation at table and using gestures calculated to meet with their approval.

More than from lonesomeness, Daisy suffered from the cold. Her big room at the top of the enormous house, rented from an expatriated Siberian millionaire, was heated only by an inadequate wood stove. Sometimes, in the morning, her fingers grew too stiff to brush out the long braids of her hair. On very bitter days, when she delayed too long in bed, and the round tin sitz tub placed by her German-speaking maid from the Baltic provinces

in the center of the room had cooled below tepid, she would drop sponge and soap in the water as camouflage and let her bathing go at that. Daisy always slept in a blue flannel wrapper, for by the time she got to bed her feet were cold, and for one reason or another the hot water bottle ordered from the English Pharmacy on the Newski Prospekt never materialized. But she spent very little of her waking hours in her room. Aside from the shriveling cold, the view across the forlorn and frozen housetops, snow-laden, veiled and obscured in the pallid northern light, oppressed her very soul. Sometimes, when the weather permitted, she and her mother walked out along the Quai des Anglais or through the strangely oriental Bazaar. On bad days Daisy wore a thinly-woven white woolen veil, her face hurt so in the penetrating cold, and her mother mortified her by scolding whenever she roughened her skin. Wherever she went, although turning just a wee bit opulent as to silhouette in her ample sealskin coat, Mrs. Redmond was obviously admired. But it was at about this time that her mother noticed that when Daisy walked with her, unveiled, the glances of the men in the street shifted sometimes from her face to her daughter's and lingered there.

As the winter deepened, Oliver Redmond's afternoons and late evenings were more and more filled with engagements in which Mrs. Redmond had no share.

He began to frequent the gambling tables at the Yacht Club, not because he cared fundamentally for cards and not entirely because he was bored at home, but because he thought it was the shortest route into the restricted circles of the fashionable Grand Dukes. Sometimes he threw his money away by foolish betting. Often he shrewdly abstained from sensational winning, even at those times when his luck was running high. Although

Susan Redmond suffered acutely from lonesomeness, huddled for hours together in her bedroom, reading over old Chicago newspapers, or writing home, close to the porcelain stove, after Daisy had gone to bed, she was comforted at least by the knowledge that she was suffering not in vain. Nor did she in her heart object to the flirtation in which Oliver was obviously involving himself deeper each day with the Austrian wife of one of his colleagues, the flaxen haired Marietta, Countess of Lichtenwald, a lady of easy morals and difficult approach. For was not the Austrian Embassy one of the two most exclusive in the whole diplomatic corps? And had they not been invited there twice to dine? Mrs. Redmond had thrown over an engagement with one of their own secretaries' wives, to accept, without a moment's hesitation. True, the first of the two dinners was almost entirely official and Mrs. Redmond could not but feel that she had made no social headway by that evening's entertainment, although she told herself she was glad just "to get to go," if for no better reason than to see how real aristocrats like the Lichtenwalds lived at home. But the second dinner was followed by a tiny dance, including only the very smartest of Petrograd society.

She had been very much admired that night. She had looked her best and felt her best; like her old self. In fact, she had enjoyed herself for the first time since her marriage, on her own account. Young Count Dimitri Kavelin, one of the smartest officers in St. Petersburg, had paid court to her all evening long as she sat regally on one of the hard damask-covered sofas, declining to dance for fear of jeopardizing her ambassadorial dignity. Although this was her first initiation, to her doubtful surprise Oliver moved about, came and went, occasionally rang a bell as if he were thoroughly at home in

Countess Lichtenwald's salons. "He could have fixed it up to bring me here before, if he had really wanted to. But of course it's always easier for a man to get in without his wife, to start with," she reflected with fine impartiality. He spent almost the entire evening, disappeared from sight, in the Countess' boudoir playing poker with four or five of the elect.

Mrs. Redmond justly suspected that the Countess Lichtenwald was responsible for the invitation to old Princess Catherine's ball. It had in reality come about in this way: about six o'clock one morning at supper at the Grand Duchess Marie Pawlowna's, after one of the Court Balls at the Winter Palace, Marietta Lichtenwald laid a hand—pale, weak, beautiful—insignia of her class and race—on the sleeve of Count Dimitri Kavelin, a huge, blond young officer, saved from coarseness by a certain leonine look of the head and the distinction of his white and gold Chevalier Garde Court uniform. They were sitting together, under a group of palms, on a red velvet sofa. Like everyone else at the little soirée, in her own house, to which she had invited the Redmonds, the Countess had been amused by the assiduous court which Kavelin paid the American Ambassadors from the moment he was presented to her.

"Kavelin, tell me, now that we have finished for the moment discussing Mamma Redmond, have you seen her girl?" she asked, opening wide her prominent blue eyes and then dropping the lids again in a manner she considered fascinating.

"Yes, only this morning, walking along the Quai with her mother. Say what you like, but the mother is magnificent. At Court did you remark her in silver brocade? Worth must have made it for her alone. It takes black hair like hers to show off a big high tiara all of diamonds.

She carries her head as a duchess *should*. Her bust is superb, and she has lovely slender ankles."

"Ah, Dimitri, what a baby you are," Marietta turned her head and slowly spread her fan. Her over-ripe Hapsburg lower lip looked sulky. "She must be twenty years older than you—and getting fat. For that reason, doubtless you admire her. The girl may never be as good-looking as her mother was, I grant you, but she has a grace and a charm. But a charm! . . ." She rolled up her blue eyes as if in ecstasy. "Just what the mother lacks," she sighed, and rolled them down again.

"I don't agree with you," Dimitri's voice unexpectedly thickened.

Marietta could not resist skimming along on an airier note, as she gathered her handkerchief and fan and prepared to rise.

"Nobody denies your friend, Mrs. Redmond, is a magnificent animal," she said, "but she has not the habit of the world. One sees that at a glance. She seems always a little in doubt as to what to do next. But Redmond, on the contrary, he is quite a nice man, isn't he?"

"He admires you extravagantly, if that is what you mean." Dimitri relaxed his frowning forehead so suddenly that the scalp on the top of his head moved. He emptied his wine glass in two great gulps.

"You know the girl is his stepdaughter," Marietta smiled prettily, and thought to herself that for all their celebrated Slavic charm the Russians were nothing better than barbarians. "But she is to get a handsome dot. He has no children of his own, you see. He told me this himself only today at tea."

As Marietta Lichtenwald knew no Russian, they had been speaking together in English which, at that time, had superseded French as the most favored language of the

fashionable. Although each had a pronounced and different accent and a child's vocabulary, they spoke with fluent unselfconsciousness. They talked of this and that, and presently the Countess returned to the original idea back of her conversation.

"Couldn't you persuade your aunt, Princess Catherina, to invite Mr. Redmond and Madame l'Ambassadrice, and the little girl, to your dance tomorrow? It is a dance for young girls, isn't it? For all your little cousins? There must be dozens of them. And I am only asked to look on. I don't dare not to go, I am so afraid of your aunt, although she seems to have taken quite a fancy to me, I don't know why—the strangest people like me"—she looked down at her fan—"I am always surprised. But if none of my flirts are there I shall be so lonesome. Do it for me—there's a good boy. Maybe Madame will wear the silver brocade and her diamonds again. All those big diamonds in that big black hair."

"She will, I am sure, if you tell the Ambassador to tell her to."

"It's a bargain then." She gave him her hand to kiss and drifted away, with her high-shouldered elegance, dragging a long rose satin train.

Old Princess Molotzina, born in the far Ukraine of Ruthenian blood and obscure origin, lived in a magnificent palace in St. Petersburg. Because of her ineffable beauty she had been married at the age of fifteen to one of the richest and most powerful princes of the empire. Although the designs for the interior of her palace were copied from originals by Gabriel in the Petit Trianon and were executed by imported French workmen during the reign of the great Catherine, nevertheless the rooms had taken on with time an over-gilded, rococo,

crimson and yellow, barbaric and very Russian gorgeousness. The Princess herself, now a hawk-nosed and beetle-browed old lady over seventy, was famous both in Moscow and St. Petersburg for the fabulous wealth her husband had left her, for her kind heart and fishwife tongue, for an imperious manner, and for the many loves of her passionate youth. She had long since discarded all attempts at corseting or even at fitting her clothes to her broad-bellied figure. She stood now near the entrance of the ballroom, dressed in a loose sable-bordered contraption of dark red velvet, the bodice cut like a short bed jacket, fastened up the front with studs of rubies. A trainless skirt, gathered front and back, showed ruby and diamond buckles on small, flat-heeled, red velvet slippers. Her iron-gray hair, coarse as Chinese, was brushed straight back from the five points of her low Slavic forehead. Around her fat throat, suspiciously dark in the creases, hung three or four rows of enormous but imperfect pearls. Two deep, exciting rubies, dimmed by dirty old-fashioned gold settings, sagged in the lobes of her ears.

Countess Lichtenwald arrived early, stiff-shouldered, pop-eyed, fair, thin-skinned as a baby; not chic according to French ideas, but exceedingly elegant after the Viennese manner. She was dressed in a skin-tight turquoise blue brocade from Spitzer, with a long, ermine-bordered train. She wore beautifully fitting white gloves, and a diadem of turquoise and diamonds in her frizzy blond hair. The old Princess brushed her cheek with her dark mustachioed lip and rumbled, scolding, in a deep, rough voice:

"Well, where are your American barbarians? You got me to ask them and they don't come."

"But look, just behind me, dear Princess." Countess

Lichtenwald crossed her hands upon her fan and with proud short steps passed on.

Down the long vista behind her, the American Ambassador and his family were advancing, their figures dwarfed to mannequin size in the triple-storied hallway. This immense, dimly lit chamber loomed so wide and high that the enormous gas-lit chandelier suspended in the center seemed to suck in the darkness, leaving black intangible spaces floating all around. The walls were hung with tapestries, swords and lances, armor, game heads and old portraits of Boyars, huge bearded men with squinting tartar eyes, shaven heads, and thin Mongolian mustachios, in gorgeous fur and brocade kaftans. From door to door Cossack servants, in long white and silver trimmed tcherkeska, with silver daggers at their tiny waists and soft, heelless boots, stood sentinel, in double file. Here and there a torch blazed up from a high gold sconce. At the four corners braziers of burning aromatic vinegar lay on tall, slim tripods. At the head of the back stairway, invisible behind gold-striped Bokhara tapestries, stood a round iron vessel smoking with incense, which cut the fetid odors from the kitchens and sleeping quarters below; odors that rose like a miasma from that vast cellar domain, where men and women, whole families lived, ate Kacha and black bread, drank tea and vodka, and died; where children were born in three-tiered wooden bunks or bundles of rags beside the stove. An unlighted, unaired and noisome region, never visited by the old Princess in all the sixty years she had lived in the palace. She was afraid of the vermin, she had said.

The American Ambassador walked ceremoniously beside his wife—flawlessly turned out, ruddy, cheerful, magnetic. Mrs. Redmond wore black velvet as suitable for her first official appearance in the role of full-fledged

chaperone to her daughter. Five diamond stars outlined the perfect coiffure of her perfect head. Daisy, reserved and graceful as a faun, followed half a step behind her mother. She was too beautifully dressed, by Worth, to meet with the unreserved approval of the indigenous matrons lining the walls. For the skirts of her white tulle dress were frosted by a faint pattern of iridescent morning glories and a spray of morning glories trailed lightly across one shoulder down to the tiny blue and mauve satin girdle. She was slim, slim, yielding slim, but not a bone showed anywhere. She had even dimples in her back, and her dark eyes looked out from a casque of honey-colored hair. She was not pretty, if you looked at her unkindly, for her nose turned up, and her mouth, though small, was coarse at the corners. But every man in the room who watched her standing there in the doorway stirred to her presence. As the old Princess greeted her, Daisy smiled nervously, blushed a little and curtsied. The old lady's face relaxed like some old malachite idol come suddenly to life. Possibly not without malicious intent towards the watchful jealous mothers, she held Daisy's hand tight within her own, looked her over from top to toe, and then kissed her soundly upon the cheek.

The ceaseless movement, the brilliant colors, the heat and light and wild insistent beat of the mazurka, excited Daisy into the dreamy first state of anaesthesia. She forgot herself and stood there, startled by the strangeness, by the swirl of light, floating dresses and splendid uniforms, and by the row of staring mothers, brave in family jewels, satin, lace and feathers. Lips parted, breathing fast, she forgot where she was and why she had come. Young Count Dimitri Kavelin, who, inspired by Countess Lichtenwald, was responsible for the Redmonds' invitation, advanced now in heavy-handsome,

guardsman fashion. Having imparted a lingering kiss on Mrs. Redmond's gloved hand, he bowed slightly to Daisy, who did not understand that he was asking her to dance until he had placed his arm firmly about her waist and turning, plunged with her into the opening figure of the mazurka. Besides her dancing lessons, Daisy had the advantage of a natural sense of rhythm, and she skimmed down the ballroom now to the wild beating melody with lovely poise and precision. Dozens of strange eyes were bracketed upon her. "She dances without reserve. . . . Amerikanski," the mothers whispered, lifting their eyebrows behind their feather fans.

A very primitive dance, the mazurka, all glory to the male in his gorgeous uniform, glittering boots and jingling spurs. To him the show-off, the cracking of heels, the leap, the swirl, the dash and quick precise control. While the female, soft, coy partridge, entices and eludes on swift little secret feet invisible beneath the floating hem of her dress, fluttering her handkerchief and turning her head aside. When in the last figure Dimitri knelt and Daisy danced around and around him, she looked down upon his blond head and, floating her little handkerchief, unconsciously she swayed her hips and waist and glanced about her, radiant, smiling.

Mrs. Redmond had seated herself beside Countess Lichtenwald. She grieved when she discovered that the Countess, who had been so very cordial to her in her own house, ignored her now with frozen inattention. She had already learned under her husband's tuition never to touch the back of her chair when in public, and never to cross anything but her wrists and ankles. Redmond had also tried to convince her that people here in Europe might sit for long interludes in pleasant, satisfactory silence. However, Mrs. Redmond had not as yet been

able to conquer her aversion for lengthy pauses. They made her nervous and weighed upon her soul. She was suffering now, but a natural awkwardness rather than wounded pride kept her silent.

Marietta Lichtenwald's prominent and wandering blue eyes suddenly concentrated in a series of flickering side glances upon a very tall, dark man, nearing the forties, who with the exception of Redmond, was the only man in the room not in uniform. He had but just arrived and stood talking to the old Princess and a group of young officers near the door. Although his lean, ivory-pale face with its long, intense, black brows, showed anything but humor, evidently he was exceedingly amusing to the primitive-minded little group gathered about him. Even from across the room the attentive attitude of the four or five young officers appeared somehow deferential. They were laughing, as if to please him, as loudly as decorum permitted, while the pearls draped across the old Princess's generous corsage shook with her merriment.

"Sergio, my little pigeon, look behind me—a lovely girl in a dress like a Christmas tree," she whispered in her breathless rumble. "Daughter of the American Ambassador. Terribly rich."

Serge Slavinsky barely glanced at Daisy before answering. "Her nose turns up so much, I fear she suffers when it rains."

The young officers jingled their spurs and laughed discreetly while the old lady reached up and pinched the lobe of Slavinsky's small flat ear.

Slavinsky was a particular favorite of the old Princess. Although he took pains always to address her as "my aunt," he was, in fact, but a distant cousin of hers, and by birth something of an outsider. For he was the illegitimate and only son of the celebrated general, Prince

Leo Slavinsky, and of one of the old Princess's Ukrainian cousins, a lady of obscure origin and scandalous repute. By special permission of the Czar he had been given his father's name, and on the old general's death-bed, his title. For ten years he had made a brilliant career as officer in the Lancers, but had resigned from the service after his father's death when he inherited one of the Slavinsky's estates, situated in the far Ukraine. Although Slavinsky was a self-made man in the world of fashion, yet various old ladies who prided themselves most on the stricture of their principles and conduct, cherished an unaccountable indulgence in their hearts for Serge; and this indulgence was all the more remarkable considering his notorious success with every other type and class of women. He had not put aside his lighted cigar when he came into the ballroom, a breach of etiquette of which he was perfectly aware and which the Princess forgave him because he had a knack, with those black eyes of his, secret under their long brows, of symbolizing for her the passionate loves of her unforgotten youth.

"Now, do what I tell you, Sergio." The old Princess laid an insistent hand upon his arm. "When the mazurka is over, ask Dimitri to present you to this American girl. He is mad over the mother—puppy love—but I know I won't have to listen to any nonsense like that from you. You say young girls bore you. This child may give you too much to think about one of these days."

"Very well, *ma tante*, always as you wish. But please permit me to sit down first for just a moment. I don't know why, but I feel a little weary."

Serge Slavinsky was accustomed to being looked at. Everywhere he went, in the theater, the restaurants, the street, or here in the crowded ballroom, men and women

followed him with their eyes. When, on rare occasions, he walked along the Quai, women muffled from head to foot in furs, peeped out at him sideways from their rapid, open sleighs, like curious bright-eyed kittens. Along the Newsky Prospekt pretty girls of the people scuffling in galoshes with the soft undulation of the near oriental, gazed up tentatively and tossed their earrings.

Still carrying his lighted cigar, he sauntered down the great room. As he approached Countess Lichtenwald sitting beside Mrs. Redmond, she turned her blond head as if to avoid the sight of him and addressed Susan Redmond for the first time directly and in rapid, intimate undertone, opening wide and then half-closing her prominent eyes: "What a lovely dress you have on. Where did you get it? From Doucet?" Her thin, curved nostrils showed bright pink, like those of a painted rocking horse. Prince Serge sat down a little way beyond them, beside Countess Nathalie Kavelin, Dimitri Kavelin's cousin—an exquisitely dressed woman about thirty years of age. She had an ugly face, save for large liquid brown eyes and a round-breasted, slim-thighed figure which exuded, no one knew just why, a pungent and voluptuous charm.

The Ambassador, seeing his wife seat herself beside Countess Lichtenwald in the chair which he had intended, as a mere matter of habit, to occupy himself, stood for a while beside the two ladies and presently passed on to the far end of the ballroom to join Nathalie Kavelin and Slavinsky, whose appearance had immediately interested him. His flirtation with Marietta Lichtenwald was definitely beginning to pall upon him. "She will never get around to taking off those long corsets," he had reflected with a sigh not unmixed with relief, as she made her stately entrance into the ballroom just ahead of them.

He listened to Nathalie's chatter, for there was a

poignant, human touch to everything she said, but his glance strayed across to Serge Slavinsky's long, calm figure. He noted the man's implacable mask, the single, enormous black pearl stud, and exaggerated velvet collar, the slow gestures, the still, intense brows, and the eyes beneath, coldly burning. And he felt his inner being swell with prejudice and loathing.

"There goes Wooden Back." Nathalie leaned slightly forward in her chair to see the stately exit of Countess Lichtenwald. "Her nose is so long and pointed, in cold weather it must always have a drop on it." She had a charming laugh, low, infectious, sincere. Even Slavinsky suddenly uncovered his small even teeth and shrugged his shoulders. Then Nathalie sat up very straight again, showing the point of one satin slipper beneath her long dress and slowly waved her white ostrich feather fan. Her fascinating, ugly face under its formal coiffure, looked like the little faces painted on an eighteenth century Chinese fan.

"But you are too unkind to desert her—both at once," she whispered cautiously, just turning her head. "Look, look! But she is leaving the room altogether and going home. Dear Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, do run after her and bring her back or she will die of spite."

Oliver Redmond, seeing that not only had Marietta Lichtenwald taken her sudden departure but that his wife, whom she had abruptly deserted, was left sitting entirely alone, rose, bowed and walked back to hover about like a horse on the end of a picket rope, until someone should come to his rescue. Except for Serge Slavinsky and three or four antiquated generals, relics of the old Princess's past, none of the older men had put themselves out to attend the Princess's débutante ball. But presently, just as Oliver was beginning to give up hope of freedom

for the rest of the evening, Count Dimitri Kavelin, having conducted Daisy back to the group of young girls forming like a flock of pigeons close together in the corner of the room, returned to Mrs. Redmond and seated himself beside her. Crossing his legs he passed his hand across his damp, slightly mottled forehead, and sighed with relief.

"Your daughter dances so beautifully," he began politely in English, as Oliver drifted away. Then, leaning forward, careless of the glances about them, he murmured, "You are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen." He had already consumed a dozen or more little vodkas and an immense quantity of champagne, and his eyes went suddenly wild. Susan, whose first impulse always prompted her to please, flashed him a radiant smile. But a rumbling kind of a growl startled her with a sense of imminent danger. Nervously, she put her handkerchief up to her lips and sitting forward in her chair, gazed about anxiously as if in search of a friendly rescue.

"I adore you," the rough, young voice rumbled again in her ear.

"Oh, for God's sake, shut up," she cried, her fan shielding her face. "You're making me ridiculous." And waving her white ostrich feathers slowly to and fro upon her bosom, she rose and majestically crossed the length of the room to join her husband.

In the meantime Nathalie Kavelin was sitting very still and upright beside Serge.

"My cousin told me he was visiting his ballet girl friend this afternoon in the Hotel de l'Europe," she was saying, glancing aside to see if they were being especially observed, "and he saw Marietta Lichtenwald coming out of a door just across the hall. So as not to hurt her Austrian pride, he popped in again before she saw him. He said

he waited ten minutes and when he came out the second time he ran into you and you were just coming out of the same door." And she looked up at him, her brown liquid eyes glittering with tears.

"What a place for a scene! Don't turn your head," Slavinsky answered in his clear staccato. "Also, people are watching. Come to my place tomorrow at five."

"Tomorrow at five," he repeated, as she shook her head and bent to inspect a crack in one of the ivory sticks of her fan. "Ah, here comes the aunt," and they both rose to their feet as the old lady approached them.

"Sergio, hear me—you can see Nathalie any time—anywhere," the old Princess rumbled, drawing her beetle brows close together. "And here's her husband arrived when nobody expected him. Why did he leave his baccarat? I ask you! Tonight you are to pay attention to my dovecot—hear me, Serge." She indicated, with a wave of her swarthy hand, the group of girls standing huddled together across the ballroom, simpering, tittering, turning, pluming; in truth not unlike a bevy of excited pigeons. "Why do you waste your time on these young married women—some of them come to dance before their milk is dry. Nathalie here—her last baby isn't six months old. . . . " A red glow flickered up in the embers of her old eyes. "And your ballet girls with horrible diseases Why don't you pick out a sweet little wife of your own tonight and marry and behave yourself for a while, Sergio? Look at my niece Nadeja. . . . No, not the blond . . . that splendid dark girl on the edge there to the right, in pale blue. If you could only see how she's made . . . like a statue, and she has quite a fine dowry. Take a peek at her leg when she dances by. And there's my cousin's daughter, Tamara. Not yet seventeen—and already a breast where a man may hide his head."

"Mais la poitrine d'une jolie femme doit être tenue dans la main d'un homme, ma tante."

Princess Catherina showed all her sound, yellow teeth and chuckled, clasping one hand to her abdomen. Then she wiped her eyes with a violently perfumed lace handkerchief, and warned Prince Serge once more that she expected him to do his duty. "It's the little ones' night. The only chance they have to meet men outside the family circle. Their marriage market, if you will. If you didn't come with the idea of at least looking them over, what did you come for, I'd like to know?" and she puckered her old lips and looked as if she were about to snarl at Nathalie, who managed to control the expression of her face, although the hands inside her gloves had turned both damp and cold.

"To see you, dear aunt. But I obey orders," and depositing his still lighted cigar on the silver tray of a passing servant, he clicked his heels together and raised an inverted hand to his forehead in mock salute. Then he walked across the room slowly with that theatrical touch to his manner and bearing which since early youth had become second nature. Evidently he had made his choice as he walked along, his eyes fastened deliberately first on one girl, then on another. And probably not one out of the twenty twittering there was unconscious of his coming. There had been quite a pause after the mazurka, a hiatus, a sickening wait for some of the girls who had as yet no escort to take them into the banquet hall, about to be thrown open for supper. The young men seemed in no hurry to join their partners, while the young maidens chattered in half whispers, smiling excitedly, peeking out through their lashes. Some of the little curls hung lank. Some of the heavy braids slipped to one side. Some of the crisp tulle dresses had already lost their vivid fresh-

ness. Virginal noses and bland young foreheads shone in unpowdered innocence.

Now the band struck up a solemn march, signal for the mothers to adjust the tilting of their heavy jeweled headpieces, to collect their fans, cigarette cases, sables and handkerchiefs, and to rise, some of them a bit rheumatically.

During this interval Serge had walked up to Daisy, bowed, offered his arm, and without speaking one word to her, proceeded slowly as if walking alone towards the banquet hall. Daisy had, as a matter of fact, already a partner, a fat young boy still in the *corps des pages*. But she never so much as thought of him again till she caught his angry eyes at supper half an hour later.

The old Princess led the procession. She seated herself at the head of the center table in an enormous stamped, green velvet and gold armchair. Her nephew, Dimitri Kavelin, had offered his arm to Mrs. Redmond, but she, after an instant of hesitation, refused him with the air of a reproachful sovereign. "I'm not here for myself tonight," she said. And she walked off on the arm of one of the oldest generals, who had been sent by the Princess to escort her.

Redmond was placed at the hostess's right. The old lady gave him one good look as they sat down and took an instant fancy to him. She liked his ruddy, genial face and thick-chested figure. A far away expression filtered into her smoldering old eyes, as she tried to recall just which of her lovers it was that he resembled. On Mrs. Redmond's right, across the table, owing to the dearth of men over the dancing age, sat a thin-haired, middle-aged lady, a member of one of the great Boyar families of Russia; a family more ancient in pomp and power than the Romanoffs; a family, moreover, which clung to the

distinction, rare indeed among the aristocracy in Russia, of choosing to accept no titles. Susan Redmond had heard, of course, of this lady's great name, and she judged from her static complaisance of manner, her frumpy dress and dirty, ill-set jewels, that she belonged to the indigenous, the exclusive, the Faubourg, as it were, of Moscow and St. Petersburg, never to be met with among the modern fashionables, never seen by the foreigner save at the more restricted court functions. She remembered the method of her early conquests—when, as widow of the handsome and sympathetic Dick Shawn (dentist), she climbed, grimly smiling, the first rungs of Chicago's social ladder, and Mesdames Department Store, Wholesale Grocer, Packer, Sewing Machine, Carriage Maker, Hardware and Hostelry had succumbed to her like ninepins, each one knocking down the resistance of the other.

And she remembered, too, Disraeli's advice to those who sought the favor of the great, "Put it on not with a spoon but with a trowel," and turned her starry gaze upon her neighbor.

"And which is your daughter?" she enquired. "Oh, that beautiful young girl in blue?" Susan gazed with rapt admiration at a galumphing maiden with greasy blonde hair, in a limp, pale blue dress. "I spoke of her earlier in the evening to my husband—we picked her out from all the others. A classic head—what a nose! After all, race tells." A deprecatory sigh. "My daughter? Oh, no, just the freshness of youth. I? Oh, Madame—I'm an old woman. Have you any other children? Nine? Alas—no—just the one" (Pause—sigh) "baby. Oh, how darling—only three and a half. *Sweet* . . . did—?" And, lowering their voices, heads together, they spoke long and earnestly of children, of obstetrics, of wet nurses, governesses, teachers, of hospitals and operations (there was

at that time no servant question in Russia), and of a sale of old lace, and another of furniture and silver which was to take place in a public auction room next day.

When Mrs. Redmond finally rose from her seat it was with an invitation for tea from the great lady. She was at home every day after five, she had said, her good face flushed and shining with new interest and excitement.

In the meantime young Kavelin had paused beside his aunt's great gold chair like a man in a dream, and gazed across at Mrs. Redmond. She, fairly launched, flushed by the conquest of her distinguished neighbor, vivid, animated, in the shaded light of the dining room, looked more beautiful than Dimitri had ever seen her. He gazed and gazed with bloodshot eyes. Old Princess Catherina reached up and twitched at his gold braided sleeve.

"My child," she rumbled, in as discreet an aside as her booming voice permitted, "stop staring like an owl; sit down somewhere with the young ones where you belong."

"But, my aunt, why mayn't I sit here? There are still empty chairs at your table."

"Have you no manners?"

"You always say I haven't. I am always wrong whatever I do, and Sergio is always right. He grabbed hold of the little Redmond girl without ever having been presented to her, and marched her in here to supper. But you scold me for just standing."

"Well, Serge is Serge. Don't try to be like him. And the girl looks quite happy." She was talking behind her fan while Kavelin bent his epauletted shoulders. "American . . . she doesn't know any better, anyhow," the Princess went on. "But your hanging around the mother makes not only a fool of yourself but of her. What will the aunts think?"

This last argument must have had a quite special significance, for Kavelin turned off sulkily and strode across the room to sit down at a table occupied by half a dozen young officers, to consume glass after glass of that brutal champagne, rank with brandy and labeled "Gout Anglais," so much in favor with the bacchanalians of that time. Leaning his blond head on his hand he stared furtively across the room at Mrs. Redmond's gorgeous back and classic profile.

On Oliver Redmond's right, at the principal table, sat Nathalie Kavelin. She looked more than ever like an eighteenth century chinoiserie, for her cheeks had strangely paled beneath two little spots of rouge left stranded there. She had managed to compose the nervous gestures of her hands, but hidden beneath the long lace cloth she crossed and recrossed her pretty feet. Accidentally one knee came into contact with Redmond's and, as if seeking solace and protection, rested there.

At the back of the long room Serge Slavinsky was relating some story, evidently for the benefit of his entire table, consisting of a dozen or so of young girls and very young men. He leaned back as he talked and, as if to exasperate the eager attention of his audience, paused to blow long, slow spirals of cigarette smoke in the air.

"I have been to your country," he was saying, addressing himself to Daisy, "a few years ago when your little dresses were above your little knees. American women are charming. The American husband, of course, is the most obnoxious husband in all the world." He paused this time to empty his champagne glass by little sips, slowly. "I have a naturally tender heart for husbands. . . . I am naturally sympathetic to husbands—all husbands excepting the American husband. . . . He is born to be. . . ." He paused and Daisy prompted him:

"But born to be what?" She felt herself somehow overbold as she spoke, perhaps because she was the only young girl at the table who had spoken out loud since they sat down. Prince Serge pushed his champagne glass a little to one side and picked up a cut glass decanter of Burgundy which the maitre d'hôtel had just placed at his elbow, a very rare wine—produced from the depths of the cellar that evening as a special favor and served to him alone. He held the decanter to his nostrils and paused before speaking, to inhale the aroma. "But I do not feel tenderly to the American husband," he resumed presently, ignoring her question. "I cannot feel tenderly and gratefully to him. . . . I cannot, because he bores me to tears . . . but to tears . . . running tears." He made a comic, puckered face, like a child about to cry. Two or three of the girls giggled shyly.

"I don't think American men are bores," laughed Daisy glancing brightly around the table, and then added with that fatal pliability caught from her mother, "but then I don't know any, excepting my stepfather, really," and stopping short, she nervously fingered her lace napkin.

"Ah, yes—your stepfather. Your mother undoubtedly looks like some one of the Greek goddesses. I forget their names. . . . I think I am beginning to feel a tender spot in my heart already for the Ambassador."

Daisy felt, without understanding why, that Slavinsky was amusing the others, somehow at her expense. He was as foreign to her as Chinese or Hindu, and his words, although they made her feel uneasy, conveyed no real meaning of their own.

"Do you live in St. Petersburg?" she inquired after a little pause, at a loss to support her end of the tête-à-tête with the magnificent creature beside her. He was silently dilating his thin nostrils over his Burgundy, and seemed

to have withdrawn from the conversation. In anxious fear that he might turn away from her altogether to the girl on his other side. "Do you live here?" she repeated.

"Yes, when I am here."

"Oh, where do you live?"

He met her gaze with eyes so black, so deep-set, they looked inhuman.

"I live on the Malaja Morsky, No. 11." He produced from his waistcoat pocket a small gold object, dropped it upon the table and with two fingers covered it from sight. Then he bent slightly toward her and lowered his voice, half smiling, evidently very much amused with himself. "Here is my key. You may have it whenever you like."

Daisy felt shocked in a physical sense, as if someone hidden behind her chair had struck her. His words, not in themselves clear to her, had explained themselves because of a flickering change in his eyes. She opened her mouth, then turned her head aside, for she could think of nothing to say. But from the corner of her eyes, she saw Prince Serge pick up the little key again and slip it into his waistcoat pocket. Almost immediately the old Princess rose from her seat and Daisy was able to melt into the group of young girls who, from all sides of the room, were flocking together.

Next morning Daisy awoke hours before the grim dawn filtered reluctantly through a curtain of sluggish, falling snow.

Her intense visual memory brought Slavinsky back to her as an actual living presence. Sometimes she saw again his entrance into the ballroom; just how and where he stood by the archway, chatting with the old Princess and the admiring young officers grouped around him.

And again she went over, as if with tiny brush and pencil, each detail of his face: the intense black eyes; the long nose and cruel nostrils; the flexible, womanish mouth; the lean jaws, sloping down to the narrow chin, and the jet black hair springing with odd vitality from the pale fine skin of the forehead. She lay spellbound, reliving so completely the scenes of that supper table that nothing of her conscious self remained. Even the light, still outline of her body seemed pre-empted of life, absorbed away into her dreams under the heavy pile of quilts and blankets.

She saw herself and Slavinsky objectively as if on a stage, and when she was not wholly engrossed by the moving, speaking images, by the visual memories of the night before, she would recount the evening to herself like a child reciting its favorite story. "And do you live in St. Petersburg?" she asked. "Yes, when I am living here," he answered. And then she would see again the manner of his placing the key upon the table and the covering of it with two fingers. She could see again his polished nails, the expression of those muscular hands. Her inner vision was clarified to painful intensity, as if gazing through a magnifying lens in full sunlight. But sometimes, without being able to formulate it, she felt again as a physical shock, the repellent chill of the man's inner nature.

Finally the tide turned. Healthy, normal reaction set in, a swamping of fresh warm compulsion. She had lain alone in her bleak, still room too many hours and she reverted suddenly to her old childish longing for her presence and her mother's room. The atmosphere of her mother's frugal and orderly possessions; cold cream jars, eau de cologne, powder, bedding, corsets scented with orris root, a "party" chemise lying across the back of the sofa to air, for Mrs. Redmond did not believe in too fre-

quent washing of her finer underwear, soiled gloves neatly rolled upon the mantelpiece, ready, maybe, for use in the morning, stockings over a chair, and maybe the silver wrapping of a square of sweet chocolate empty on the night table. She lay still, debating for a while longer the pros and cons of a flight through the icy halls downstairs, when suddenly she found herself on the floor, propelled out of bed as if by a will outside her own. Snatching up her rabbit-lined slippers and Jaeger wrapper, she ran across the room and closed with shrinking fingers the tiny ventilator which opened through to the outer window. Although it was past ten o'clock, it was not yet fully daylight. A sick, thick grayness filled the whole outdoors. Undecided snowflakes floated monotonously to the streets below. A thin stream of traffic slipped along in silence like objects from a phantom world. And the great River Neva lay stark and dead under its shroud of ice and snow, its presence in the desolate empty spaces beneath the bridges intensely felt although not seen.

Since her marriage, Daisy had refrained from her old habit of bursting into her mother's room without warning. She thought she would never recover from the shock one morning when Redmond's voice, raised gay and clear over her mother's murmured protestation, had answered her hesitant knocking with a quick "Come in." There they were, drinking their morning coffee, sitting up in bed together, her mother and this man turned suddenly into an utter stranger clad in lavender silk pajamas. Her mother bent her face over a letter she pretended to read, but Daisy caught a lively mocking look in Oliver's eyes.

"Now, don't be silly—either of you," he had said. "Daisy, sit down on the foot of the bed and have breakfast with your family. What's a family for, I'd like to

know?" This morning, however, it was Mrs. Redmond's voice alone which answered her knock and it sounded tense and irritated. Daisy glanced through her eyelashes at the untouched pillows on the far side of the bed.

"Mamma, may I have breakfast with you?" she asked. "I'm so cold and lonesome." Oliver and mother don't sleep in the same bed regularly, like the Schultzes, she was thinking. I guess they are too fashionable.

"Yes—just ring." Mrs. Redmond looked unexpectedly mollified when she saw it was only Daisy. "I wanted to talk to you anyway. Sit down over there by the fire. I wanted to say—why, Daisy, you looked perfectly lovely last night. I was so proud of you!" If Daisy had glanced at her mother's face, she would have seen that it bore an odd exposed expression as if suddenly stripped bare. But Daisy, embarrassed by this sudden praise, had slipped into the adjoining dressing room.

"Your dress was beautiful, Daisy." Her mother raised her voice when she heard Daisy pouring out warm water from the hot water can for her face and hands. "Lovely, really. But do you know, I was just thinking you could stand your dress off the shoulders. You're very thin but your shoulders have a pretty line to them. Drop your nightgown down," she said, as presently Daisy reappeared through the curtains, combing back her hair from her face. "Let me see—come over here. I'll show you what I mean. Come here." Mrs. Redmond stretched out her hands and snapped her fingers, impatient to catch hold and demonstrate.

Daisy shrank together and pulled her wrapper close. "Oh—no, Mamma, I can't."

"You act like a fool. I'm only trying to help you. Don't you suppose I know? Come over—come here, Daisy. I want to see."

Like a mechanical toy pulled along on invisible wheels, all of a piece, Daisy approached.

"Sit down here—don't be so silly. Aren't I your mother? Let go—you haven't got any bust anyhow. Daisy had always shrunk from the touch of her mother's hands. Insensitive hands—hands from which she could not remember ever having received a caress. They seized the Jaeger wrapper, those impatient hands, snatched hold of the cotton batiste nightgown and yanked it down from the slim white shoulders, while Daisy, crimson, crossed her arms convulsively to hide her breast. Daisy naturally could not understand that this whole procedure, in so far as Mrs. Redmond herself was concerned, was merely a matter of the simplest expediency. A bit of normal routine; she and Daisy, business partners, checking up together on the inventory of their joint account.

Mrs. Redmond had lain awake half the night scheming the next move in her daughter's career. Daisy was to be a success. Since the ball the night before there was no longer the slightest doubt of that. Of course, she had to be pushed a little and in the right direction. There were prettier girls—a few, not many—and richer, for Daisy hadn't as yet a cent. Still she had assets a-plenty with which to make a splendid marriage, that is, providing of course, that Oliver grew fond enough of the girl to settle a substantial dot upon her. Mrs. Redmond, not without certain shapeless misgivings, had from the first counted upon this eventuality.

"These continentals make wretched husbands. Russians especially—the worst in the world. I want Daisy to make a great marriage but I want her to settle down and be respectable. She has a very physical nature. Just like her father!" and she curled her lip in the dark. "Well, I'll have to fix it up to go to London in the spring.

For decent and fine living the English have the rest of the whole world beaten to a frazzle."

Mrs. Redmond lifted her ardent gaze suddenly while Daisy, sitting there bewildered, still drooped her eyes in shame. "Your teeth," said her mother, "aren't as good as mine, but they're even and white. Now, you know, Daisy, your mouth is a little full. Try sucking it in at the corners." Daisy jumped off the bed and covered her shoulders at the sound of Oliver Redmond's knock. Almost simultaneously he opened the door and walked in. His thick chest and muscular arms stretched the wine colored silk of his dressing gown.

"Good morning—good morning. B-r-r," he cried, rubbing his hands together, and proceeding to draw up a chair opposite Daisy's by the stove. "I've ordered my coffee here. This is the only warm room in the house. Well, how did you sleep, my dear?" and he glanced across at his wife, who wore a red velvet and ermine bed jacket which he had designed specially for her at Worth's. But she had spoiled the effect by twisting a gray woolen scarf about her throat, for it felt a little sore, she said, that morning.

Mrs. Redmond's elderly English maid (whom she detested for the silent judgments she suspected the woman passed upon her) now entered with Daisy's coffee on a tray. Oliver sat down on the arm of Daisy's upholstered armchair.

"Dear," he said, "if you love me, let me have a sip of your coffee. You couldn't possibly guess what my head feels like. Filthy vodka and zakowski! These Russians swallow enough of both, standing up, to fill an ordinary bear. And then they sit down at table and eat a large meal as if nothing had happened."

He lifted Daisy's coffee cup with one hand and with

the other pulled her close with an affectionate playful gesture. "We were very proud of our child last night. Weren't we, my dear?" he said, and gazed down into the depths of Daisy's honey-colored hair. Mrs. Redmond felt suddenly as if the littlest mouse in the world were scuttling across the room. "But," she reasoned with herself, "the best thing that could happen to Daisy would be if Oliver got really fond of her. He'll make a settlement on her one day. Besides, he said 'our child.'"

"Daisy, drop a bit of honey," said Oliver presently, holding out a piece of toast, his right arm still around the girl's shoulder's. She held up the spoon, while the amber sweet slid down, gathering slow shape, thick and unwilling. She liked the feel of his warm, vital hand and sank back, prickly with self-consciousness but warm, secure, contented and also obscurely aware that she and Redmond together had succeeded somehow in annoying her mother.

"Who was that long, black fellow you were having supper with?" Oliver inquired, munching. "I was introduced to him but I don't remember his name."

"Why, his name is Slavinsky—Prince Slavinsky. He said he'd just got back from the Riviera." Daisy lowered her voice, turning away from the great bed, as if she and Oliver were speaking alone together.

But Susan Redmond interrupted them from among her pillows: "Well, I found out all about him last night," she said. "He's a bad egg. He's an awful gambler and terrible with women and never pays his bills."

"Nothing unusual in that in this community," Oliver retorted, and he held out a honey-smirched finger to Daisy. "Dip a corner of your napkin in the water glass, there's a lamb," he said. "I'm all stuck up. Oh—hell, here's some on my dressing gown." While Daisy obe-

diently ministered to him Mrs. Redmond continued, her black eyes brooding.

"He isn't even one of the real Slavinskys. I'll tell you about it later, Oliver." She raised her eyebrows significantly. "That nice woman—I can't call them anything if they haven't got titles, because I can't remember their names—told me the whole story. You know I sat next to her at supper. She seemed to take a tremendous shine to me. You know, she belongs to one of the oldest Boyar families in Russia. And she ought to know the truth about Slavinsky. Her family is a whole lot older than the Romanoffs."

"Well, he's a Prince, isn't he?" said Daisy, looking sulky.

Mrs. Redmond made a show of contemptuous laughing. "In England a title amounts to something; only the eldest son gets it. But this country is rotten with titles. Every child has the same title as its parents. She said Slavinsky's mother was a Ukrainian, whatever that is; a nobody. And worse than that. His father was all right, I guess. But Slavinsky, she says, isn't really anything himself. Just handsome."

Redmond drained his coffee cup, stood up, stretched himself and yawned. "Susan, you are the world's worst snob," he said.

"Yes, I am a snob. And what's more, I intend to be a snob," Mrs. Redmond blazed forth, her repressions of the last half hour unexpectedly getting the better of her. "And what's more, I'd like to know where you'd be today if your father and mother hadn't been snobs and your grandparents before them. One of your grandfathers was nothing but a fur dealer—and the other ran a ferry."

"Well, I must confess, Susan, there is a certain icy logic in your flaming speech," and he paused on the

threshold of his wife's room just long enough to wink at Daisy and close the door ever so gently behind him.

Under ordinary circumstances Daisy's mood would have ruffled up instantly to challenge her mother's, but now instead, unconsciously, she reflected her stepfather's easy superiority of manner.

"Say, mamma," she began, brows lifted, smiling. "Say, didn't I leave——"

"Don't say 'say.' It's too common for words—like your father's——"

"My handkerchief——"

"No, you didn't—and I want you to run along to your room now—I've got a lot of things to attend to this morning."

"What kind of things? Cawn't I help you? Cawn't I finish my breakfast here?"

"I'm glad to see you're beginning to remember the broad a at last. But don't say 'cawn't I.' Say 'mayn't I —mayn't I finish my breakfast here?'" Mrs. Redmond swung a pair of fine white legs over the edge of the huge bed and reached for her dressing gown. Daisy darted forward with her slippers.

"Well, mayn't I, then, finish my breakfast here? It's so cold and miserable upstairs."

"Now, about that Slavinsky man." Mrs. Redmond stood up straight, wriggled her toes forward to assure her slippers, and nervously rebraided her great rope of black hair. "He's just the kind of blackguard who would try to turn the head of a young girl like you. I watched you at supper last night. Now, if ever we meet again I'll just drop him the hint that you're only Oliver's stepchild—and that you haven't a cent of your own in the world. Not a cent—and never will have, so far as I know."

Daisy pushed back her coffee cup, rose, stretched, and yawned.

"It seems very hard to have a pleasant conversation with you about anything," she said. "Look out, if you get back into bed—you've dropped quite a lot of egg on the sheet, mamma."

In the afternoon, because of the fine weather, Daisy and Mrs. Redmond went driving along the Quai des Anglais in their open sleigh. The Embassy coachman, bearded and belted, wrapped in triple fur-lined coat, sat, top-shaped, arms outstretched, behind a huge long-legged, Moscow trotter. Down the Quai they came a-skimming, a V of powdered snowflakes trailing high behind. The street was crowded with sleighs—students, officers, women and children, muffled up until they looked as broad as they were long; and a few fashionables promenaded along the embankment. There was a feeling of relief, even of gayety in the air, as if for a holiday. Even the golden angel which crowned the Petropavlovsky cathedral flickered wanly in the pale sunshine.

On the rumble the Embassy chasseur, a tall fiercely mustached functionary who accompanied Mrs. Redmond everywhere, with booted legs far apart, clutched hold of two leather straps to keep a treacherous equilibrium.

One of the elder Grand Dukes, like so many of the Romanoffs, physically at least a god-like figure, wearing the tall gray astrakhan cap of his Cossack regiment inclined to one ear, a bearskin rug slipping from his knees, had saluted Mrs. Redmond and Daisy as their sleighs flashed by, and turned to follow them with admiring eyes. "We are a very good-looking pair, my dear," said Mrs. Redmond, smiling, pulling her hand for a fleeting moment from her muff to raise her dotted veil which had begun

to freeze about her mouth and nostrils. "Really, Daisy," she said, "you're getting prettier each day. I noticed it last night. Have I got a black spot on my nose?" Grand Duke André, the Emperor's cousin, had passed too—boyish, rosy-cheeked, shy. Then the famous Kshesinskaya, ballet dancer, once mistress, in fact the only mistress, of the Czar in his youth. Her sealskin wrap glistened in the sunshine. Two huge diamonds twinkled from her ears.

"Say, mamma——"

"Don't say 'say!' Didn't I tell you that this morning?"

"Well, wouldn't you think that ballet dancer would freeze her ears with those metal rings stuck through them?"

"Maybe her ears are used to the climate," Mrs. Redmond answered absently. She had just spied a tiny black and silver sleigh coming around a corner and in it seated the most extravagant, the most sought-after, capricious and fascinating woman in St. Petersburg, Varia, Duchess of Bramtemberg.

Mrs. Redmond nudged Daisy and opened wide her black diamond eyes. "Daisy, look! Look quick! Here comes Varia Bramtemberg. I didn't know she'd got back from Cannes. She's almost royal, you know." A thin, painted woman flashed by. She wore a sable toque with a black paradise aigrette fastened in by a jeweled clasp, a sable cape, and a sable rug tightly wrapped about her knees. Even the thick muffling of her furs could not hide the grace and distinction of her long silhouette. "She's awfully rude," Mrs. Redmond commented. "She never even bows to me. Pretends she's looking somewhere else. But she used to talk to Oliver before she went away . . . quite a lot."

"Oh——, look—look—Oh, look—The Emperor! the Empress!"

A double open Protetka, drawn by two huge, long-legged, coal-black Orloff trotters, flashed by at breakneck speed. Daisy just caught a glimpse, through the misty sunshine and flying snow, of a large woman with a beautiful set face half hidden within her voluminous furs, and of a nice-looking, smallish man, in a simple gray military overcoat. An immense Cossack attendant, in black tcherkeska and bear-skin bonnet, standing behind, was by far the more impressive of the three.

As Mrs. Redmond's sleigh drew up before the Embassy, the Duchess of Bramtemberg flew by again, and Daisy and her mother, glancing after her, saw her lean forward and speak to the coachman, who braced his feet, and measuring the strength of his burly back and arms against the hard-mouthed trotter, pulled the horse back on its haunches. The tiny gleaming sleigh veered, turned, and to Mrs. Redmond's and Daisy's astonishment, for they were still staring and lingering beneath the porte-cochère, dashed back and drew up beside them in a flurry of snow.

Varia Bramtemberg held out her hand to Mrs. Redmond, who was obliged to advance half a dozen steps to take it. Her large sad eyes were half veiled by darkened drooping lids. Her thin brows arched incredibly. She had a pointed, tilted nose, a baby mouth and little white teeth. On either cheekbone lay lightly a spot of rouge. She had a disdainful, finicky manner, and she was unstable and fluent and capricious, like thin smoke. "May I come in?" she inquired in English, her voice a sexless boy's soprano. "I'm so lonesome."

"Oh, yes, do come in—greatest pleasure—Is it too early for tea? Would you like tea? How lovely you look. I didn't know you were back," cried Mrs. Redmond and secretly chided herself for not better controlling the mid-

western exuberance of her manner, even as she sprang forward to greet the Duchess.

"May I have tea? I'm famished." Varia rippled along in her inconsequential treble. "I lunched with Susie to-day and you know what an awful cuisine Susie always has."

Mrs. Redmond had no inkling even of who Susie might be, but she smiled and brightly nodded. Together they mounted the three red-carpeted steps under the porte-cochère to the first vestibule. Daisy shyly dallied behind so that the two ladies might ceremoniously enter side by side. Awestruck—she glanced upward at the smart Helstern button boots just showing beneath the shining sable cape, wrapped tight about Varia's narrow figure. Pausing there she turned her eyes back to the street and saw Serge Slavinsky standing stock still, leaning on his walking stick. His black eyes, looking through the shadows of the porte-cochère were fixed upon her. Under a long astrakhan-lined coat, gray tweed trousers showed, smartly turned up. A black astrakhan cap was set well to one side on the graying hair about his temples. Although evidently he had been walking along the icy street, he wore no galoshes. And he was smiling, his thin smile which had nothing to do with the fixed expression of his eyes.

"Aren't you coming?" Varia called back over her shoulder, without looking at Daisy. But receiving no answer, she turned her head, supple, swan-like, and saw Slavinsky standing there. Then she smiled, and beckoned lightly. "But what are you doing," she cried when he had approached and had bent to kiss her hand. "What are you doing, walking these horrible streets like a lost soul? And you have no galoshes! You must be cr-razy—you must be frozen—you are more English zan the Eng-

lish! What affectation! Come in and have some tea! Mrs. R-r-redmond, mayn't Slavinsky have tea? You don't mind—he's a ver-ry bad man. But one has to forgive him ever-ryzing, he is supposed to be charming. I don't know why."

Mrs. Redmond, all smiles, looking suddenly ten years younger, begged Slavinsky to join them, even holding out her hand as if to usher him in. Simultaneously with the Duchess's airy beckoning and familiar, even affectionate chiding, she forgot the ill reports she had heard the night before, and felt even flattered that Slavinsky should so unceremoniously drop in for tea. They were in the first vestibule by now, only half warmed from the stinging outside cold by a huge white porcelain stove. Three footmen from the Baltic provinces, but dressed in English livery, knelt to divest the ladies of their furlined overshoes, while the fourth helped Slavinsky off with his overcoat and hung it upon one of the wooden pegs set for that purpose in a long row upon the wall. The Duchess dropped her cape, disclosing a skin-tight fitting garment of unborn lamb, fastened at the tiny waist, at the wrists, and again at the high collar with buckles of black onyx and diamonds. They passed into the tomb-like atmosphere of the great inner hall as the double doors of the vestibule closed behind them. It was floored with yellow marble, walled with marble of gray and rose, and the heavily gilded ceiling was painted after the manner of Tiepolo. Six black marble caryatides, three gigantic male figures, twisted forever in silent agony, and three equally tortured, drooping breasted females, bore upon their knotted shoulders the wrought white marble archways which opened upon the *escaliers de gala* leading up to the state dining room, reception hall and ballroom on the second floor.

Mrs. Redmond had an inspiration. "Come," she said, "let's go all the way upstairs to my boudoir. It's so cold on these first two floors." And then with a flash of the old Chicago spontaneity: "I would ask you all into my bedroom if I knew you a little better," she laughed. "It's the only warm room in the house."

"Oh—do ask us—Oh, do let me see. I'm dying—I'm dying to see." Varia rippled along like a child at play, talking to itself. She never appeared to listen herself to anything she had to say. Daisy marveled that this woman she had imagined as an Egyptian Isis, chill and imperious, should turn out to be so natural and silly, and yet remote somehow, like a lovely picture hung too high upon the wall.

"I've had a cold for three weeks," said Mrs. Redmond, as she led the way under the groaning caryatides and up the garish stairway. She coughed into her handkerchief quite seriously as if to prove her statement.

Slavinsky, with Daisy, tarried behind, gazing to the right and left and finally at the ceiling. "I came here once ten years ago—to a ball—a charity ball of course. A Siberian platinum mine man built this place. He ate the roast with his fingers but he was too rich to be altogether vulgar."

He glanced up the great stairway at the animated figures of the two ladies. Varia, fluent, graceful—Mrs. Redmond, splendid and robust, her high heels clicking smartly. He considered them a moment and then turned to Daisy.

"You were lovely last night," he said, and glanced up again at the Duchess as she turned to the right along the double stairway. "Come here—I want to show you something." The tone of his voice never seemed to alter. His words always came slow, distinct, staccato. He led

her by the arm to one side behind one of the black marble caryatides. Two of the footmen had preceded the ladies up the stairs, and the hall, for the moment, was empty. "American girls are quite different from our little geese," he said. "I know that. I've been to America."

"Yes," said Daisy faintly. She felt terribly concerned over the strange trembling which had laid hold of her arms and knees, and she wondered if Slavinsky could possibly notice it. She knew that he meant to touch her, take her in his arms, maybe kiss her and she craved with queer, sudden anguish to be taken. Her heart beat so she was afraid he would feel its pounding and even through the high crest of her excitement she felt horribly aware of herself, of him, and of her mother's voice calling her from the top of the stairs. Yet, he did not kiss her after all. He merely stroked her hair and passed a finger down her cheek, and it was he who broke the spell, and turned away. "Your mother is calling," he said. "But—maybe—run away if you can to your room first. You have got pale."

That evening, before dinner, the little family sat grouped around the stove again in Mrs. Redmond's bedroom. Her face was flushed and her gestures feverish and animated.

"Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink. I suppose there are a couple of hundred rooms in this palace, and not one decent place to sit in," said Oliver, hands in his pocket, warming his back at the stove.

"Really, the Duchess is the most perfect *grande dame* I ever met in my life, and so simple! Just as natural! Really, I wouldn't wonder if all that grand manner she puts on comes from shyness. She told me herself she was awfully shy and suffers tortures."

"I don't believe it," grumbled Daisy. "I bet she doesn't suffer any. She's exquisite and all that but I think she's kind of silly."

"She's no fool! You're the fool," Mrs. Redmond retorted. "Even if you're born a Goulieffski and marry royalty, you don't get a position like hers and keep it just by being silly. She asked us all to supper after the ballet next Monday. They say she gives the grandest parties in St. Petersburg—and, believe me, you can't give grand parties without some kind of brains. I bet all the grand dukes will be there, and certainly the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlowna. She goes there the whole time."

"You are positively flushed with your triumphs, my dear," said Oliver.

"If my face is flushed, it's because I've got a fever," Mrs. Redmond answered with dignity and put one hand to her cheek. "I've been fighting a cold for weeks. What I should do is to go to bed and stay there. But there's the court ball tomorrow night. I don't care a bit for myself—but Daisy simply has got to go now. We've told everyone she's coming. And I don't want anyone but me to present my own daughter."

Neither husband nor child believed her. They could not imagine the odd metamorphosis: that relentless ambition of hers switched around like a spotlight from herself to her child. For herself now she was no longer quite so keen. Whether or not they wanted her, she reasoned, there was no stopping her. For really she held a superfluity of trump cards: Beauty, wealth, a high official position, respectability, a charming husband, and a lovely daughter.

"We were silly not to let Daisy go to the first Court balls," Mrs. Redmond went on. "She appears so much better than most of these gawky girls here—And she's

got the loveliest pale pink tulle dress—just came to-day from Doucet. It was so sweet of you, Oliver. . . . These women here tell you how marvellous the St. Petersburg dressmakers are, but you notice they all get their clothes in Paris just the same. I want you to look your very prettiest, Daisy.”

Oliver, swinging his foot nervously up and down, appeared not to listen. “Well, my dear,” he turned to Daisy smiling, “and how did you find your beau tenebreux this afternoon?”

“My what?”

“Slavinsky. Your supper partner of last night.”

“He seems to be an intimate friend of the Duchess,” Mrs. Redmond interrupted. “She told me a lot about him as we came downstairs. It’s kind of funny. She says his father belongs to one of the very best and oldest families in Russia. In fact that he’s a kind of cousin of hers. She says he has two or three big estates in Volynia—that’s in South Russia—the Ukraine, they call it—right near the old Princess Catharina’s summer place where she goes every year. I guess he’s right in that little set of hers, only we haven’t seen him because he’s been in Monte Carlo all winter. They don’t seem to feel like we would about his being the son of . . . you know . . . not married . . . I must say he’s a handsome man. He has such handsome hands.”

“Well, what did you think, Daisy?” Redmond persisted.

“Why, I think—he’s nice,” said Daisy, steadying her mouth. She picked up a little tea cake from the tray, nibbled off a corner, and put it down again.

“Well, where on earth did you disappear to?” Her mother apparently was struck with a new idea. “I sent one of the footmen for you. Why didn’t you come down?”

You should always come to tea now that you are out in society and really grown up."

"Oh, well——" Daisy nibbled at another tea cake. "I guess the footman didn't understand you. I don't think our footmen understand even their own languages, whatever they are."

Redmond rose and paced slowly up and down the room. "I wouldn't put much faith in anything Varia Bramtemberg has to say about Slavinsky," he remarked. "I hear she has had, or is still having, an affair with him. And now she wants to see him nicely married. A custom of the country we Americans don't naturally understand. I shouldn't be surprised if she had arranged to meet him here to give him a hand up. Anyway, remember these foreigners always work together. Remember this—no foreigner of Slavinsky's type marries an American girl, except for money."

"Don't—before Daisy," Mrs. Redmond's Victorianism revolted. "Marriage!" she cried. "Nobody's talking about marriage, Oliver, and nobody has the right to say such things."

"Well, all I have to say is this: I'd just about as soon see a daughter of mine dead as married to a fellow like Slavinsky—Velvet collars—and black pearl studs. He looks to me like an actor."

"Daisy will probably marry in England," Mrs. Redmond broke in. "Slavinsky is too old to interest Daisy anyway. Don't exaggerate like that—it's silly. But we should try to make a few attractive men like him get into the habit of coming to the house. You know,—just dropping in. How can a young girl be a belle unless she has half a dozen men around her? Nothing like two or three offers to start a girl off right. Why, when I was a girl in Cleveland I'd always look at the hall table when I came

in and say: 'Any letters, telegrams, flowers or proposals?' And generally, there they'd be, all four of them."

Mrs. Redmond threw back her head and laughed so unnaturally that Daisy glanced up surprised.

"Mamma," she said, "I believe you're sick. Why don't you go to bed?"

"I'm not sick. But I think I will go to bed early. I'll take a good, stiff toddy and go to bed so I'll be all right for to-morrow." And bending down to Daisy, she kissed her cheek. "I'm real proud of you, Daisy," she cried. "Well, we've had a grand day—sorry you missed the tea-party, Oliver." And, opening the door, she bundled them out of the room, talking and laughing after them as they walked down the hall together, with an uncanny, sweet vivacity.

Daisy did not actually see her mother again, although she spoke to her several times during the day through the door, until the next evening. All that afternoon, with soap and brush and washcloth, with pincers and perfumes and powder she consecrated to the preparation of her body. This long ecstasy of preparation had so exasperated Daisy's nerves that when Mrs. Redmond walked into her room about nine o'clock, Daisy turned and gazed at her, with wild and hostile eyes. Mrs. Redmond appeared to be out of breath from mounting the stairs. She went directly to the bed to examine the lovely sparkling pink tulle dress which Daisy's maid had just laid out upon the shabby bedspread. Then she picked up the pink satin slippers and balanced one upon each forefinger.

"It's you who have the little feet," she cried, "not me. Well, I don't want to make you nervous watching you do your hair. Remember how you used to drive me wild hanging around while I got dressed? Well, tables have turned." She seemed in a very gay mood. "Now, re-

member, brush your hair straight up off your forehead. You've got a lovely, low forehead. I don't know why you can't remember to show it. My God, it's freezing cold here—I'm going to move you down into one of those rooms next to mine—you can't look pretty if your hands and feet are cold." But she seemed loath to leave and loitered around the room, hugging her Jaeger wrapper close and coughing a little. "I'll come back again. And for heaven's sake, don't be late. Emperors and Empresses don't wait even for Daisy Shawns. Well—I don't want to make you nervous," she said finally by the door. But once outside she came back again to advise a little powder on the nose. "But not too much. You know the girls here don't use any."

Daisy, glistening in her pink tulle dress, seated before the dressing table, was pulling her hair down all over again, in a sort of desperate frenzy, when her mother shuffled in, overshoes already on, and wearing a brand new ermine cloak and the great high diamond tiara Redmond had given her when they were married.

"Oh, heavens and earth, Daisy—what are you doing—aren't you ready?"

"Oh, mamma, I'm almost crazy. I've done it over four times."

"Well, you should have known better than to wash your hair to-day," Mrs. Redmond answered tartly. "I know how it is. Now you've got ten minutes more, so don't get nervous—plenty of time—but *only* ten minutes. I just came up to see how your evening cloak looks," she said, turning her back to Daisy and walking over to the bed. "Now, don't begin to get nervous. I'm not watching you. I thought your cloak looked shabby at Princess Molotzina's. You see, I wore it a lot last winter." She picked up Daisy's gray squirrel wrap to examine the col-

lar. "It is shabby—and dirty too. Heavens! my glove—just from holding it." She slipped out of her ermine cape and clutched a white woolen scarf close to her throat. "Here—you put this on. I'll wear my blue velvet and mink. It isn't so warm—but in a closed carriage—(Thank God, we don't have to go in an open sleigh like some of the poor officers' wives!)—and I want you to look your very best to-night, coming and going and everything. First impressions count more than anything—and all the young grand dukes will be there. You know, grand dukes do occasionally marry for love," she tossed back from over her shoulder.

Encumbered by a long tortoise-shell hairpin between her teeth, Daisy was incapacitated from speech. Besides, so harassed was she by this wretched business of coiffing her shining mane of tawny hair, that wraps and shabby fur collars were of no interest to her at the moment, nor could she realize that her mother had just made for her sake her first real sacrifice. Ill with a cold, Mrs. Redmond relinquished cheerfully her new warm ermine cloak for one more vulnerable to the arctic night, and made in less becoming fashion.

Daisy never could bring back a clear memory of her first—and as it turned out her last court ball. The drive in the freezing night, along the lifeless Neva, over the snow-covered wooden pavements to the enormous, brilliantly illuminated winter palace. The long waiting in an impatient line of carriages and sleighs. She could never have told from memory at which of the four principal entrances they finally alighted. She paid no attention to Redmond explaining on the way that the diplomatic corps were always designated to "Sa Majesté's." The French Ambassador's carriage drove up just in front of theirs. As if from the fragment of a dream Daisy caught the in-

congruous expression of Count de Montebello's frozen, serious, pale face and monocle under the frivolous waving feathers of his gold-laced, three-cornered hat. Dozens of servants in gorgeous red capes, long staffs in their hands, and hundreds of soldiers in dress uniform guarded the entry. Who took her mother's ermine cloak from her shoulder? She never knew; nor was she even conscious of folding together the little numbered card given her in exchange for her own wrap, or of pressing it within the opening of her glove.

Nor could she ever visualize herself moving up the vast, white marble stairway, dazzling with its brilliant lights and mirrored reflections; of flashing jewels and bright feathers; of velvets and brocades; and gold-laced, gold-braided, vivid colored uniforms. Nor did she really see the magnificent guardsmen, some of them with hair and mustaches dyed black for the occasion, lining the walls, in uniforms of red and white, with helmets of silver, crested by silver winged eagles. Or if she noticed them they appeared to her as if frozen together, linked with the huge stone vases which adorned the stairway, as part of the same repetitious decorative and lifeless frieze.

Lips parted, eyes dark with excitement, she had followed along beside her mother like a bewildered filly running close to its dam. Sometimes lagging a step behind, she followed along over kilometers of polished floor, through hall after hall, to the great Pompey rotunda where bearded Cossacks, immense in red kaftans and black astrakhan caps, stood guarding the entrance to the grand ballroom, the wild savage soul of them glittering through their unwinking eyes. One of the Masters of Ceremonies, stiff with the gold embroidery of his black uniform and carrying a slender ivory-handled stick, approached the American Ambassador and Mrs. Redmond

who were standing in a group of diplomats. He bowed, and murmuring in French, guided them through to their proper places in the grand ballroom, in the line of diplomats now forming on either side of the doors which led to the Emperor's private apartments.

The Grand Master of Ceremonies, Count Hendrikoff, tapped three times with his wand upon the floor and the light tapping of his aides echoed here and there down the hall. A tense hush fell upon the multitude. Mrs. Redmond, barely moving her lips, managed to turn her head to Daisy standing just at her elbow, and whisper: "Don't forget to curtsy—and smile. For God's sake, can't you keep off my train?"

The golden door opened and in the frame stood the Emperor Nicholas and the Empress Alexandra of Russia, and behind them a glittering suite of aides and lesser royalties.

Like a wheatfield before the first imperious gust of storm the huge assembly bowed their heads in silent unison.

A man below middle weight, the shortness of his legs accentuated by the blue, baggy trousers tucked into high boots of the Prebrajenskey uniform: just an average kind of man,—bearded, with Slavic cheek bones, a short inadequate nose, and full-lidded, kind and faithful eyes. To his right a woman taller than he, a vision in flashing jewels, swathed in white and silver. She wore a mask upon her face, a mask borrowed from ancient times and thrust at birth into her baby hands—a mask fashioned when the kings of this earth made themselves into images of unjust and fearful and capricious gods: images too terrible to look upon with the naked eye, to be approached blindly and groveling upon the ground. A face from which every vestige of human expression had been

stricken, as if frozen out. A beautiful face, pale beneath the weight of its glittering diamond crown.

The Czar and Czarina, followed by their train of Grand Dukes and Grand Duchesses, inclined their heads gravely and separated before the gilded doors, and proceeded, the Emperor down the line of foreign diplomats, the Empress to greet the ladies of their corps.

Slowly she approached: Alexandra of the stricken face—while Daisy stared, close to tears at this figure glittering, strangely beautiful and still, like a waterfall frozen in the moonlight. A nudge from Mrs. Redmond's elbow reminded her of her curtsy. She sank, if a shade tardily, to the very ground, so that her pink tulle skirts billowed and foamed about her.

"And do you like St. Petersburg?" a voice slower than the ordinary, but without a trace of accent, was asking in English as Daisy and Mrs. Redmond rose to perpendicular again.

Daisy dared not lift her eyes. But while her mother answered, breathless, monosyllabic, she observed suddenly a stout, Teutonic and very human upper arm above a long, tight, white glove. An arm weighted below the elbow with unimaginable emerald and ruby bracelets. A mottled arm, unseemly to associate with that pale and beautiful, that narrow and ascetic face.

"And is this your first visit here?" Again the slow painful voice. The Empress held tight in her crossed hands an ivory and white ostrich fan; and Daisy's eyes, sinking away from that too familiar arm, saw that the long tips of the feathers were all of a desperate tremble.

Like a crystal statue carved in one piece, save for her stricken suffering eyes, the sovereign passed on to the next Ambassadrice in rank, and while her immense silver, sable-bordered train dragged slowly by, Daisy,

twittering in a gust of nervous excitement, tilted forward to her mother's ear and whispered: "Gee, mamma, she's just as scared as we are!"

The orchestra burst into lovely waltz music. A Master of Ceremonies with a light touch of powder upon his chronically reddened nose, bowed low, and presented to Daisy a handsome though stoutish young man: "The Grand Duke Boris."

"I have been to your country," said the Grand Duke as they danced off together. He had an agreeable, humorous, thick-tongued speech. Presently the ruching of Daisy's tulle skirts caught in the silver spur of a young officer dressed in the dark green uniform with white belt and white epaulettes of the Imperial suite. As he whirled away in the opposite direction a long spiral of pink tulle, still attached to his heel, unraveled from Daisy's dress, as if from a bodkin. "The Emperor is looking at us," murmured the Grand Duke, chuckling, in his thick throat, just as Daisy, utterly dismayed, caught sight of the accident. "Never mind. Come, let's dance aside and tear it off." And he added kindly, as Daisy, hidden behind some officers, tore the last of the ruching from her skirt. "Never mind. Don't let your mother scold. Say it's my fault."

Excited by the little contretemps and flattered by the attention of the young Prince, Daisy blushed crimson and held up the hem of her torn dress. "I've got some safety pins tucked inside my belt," she said, "if I could only get at them."

"Come to the Malachite Hall," said Boris, pleased by her prettiness and her confusion. "I'll show you the way—and we can get a glass of champagne and be back in time for the *contredanse*. I believe you are to dance it with my brother André."

"Oh, is it all arranged?"

"All arranged. Everything is always arranged at these balls. I'm glad it was arranged I should waltz first with you."

As the Grand Duke passed through the crowd, with Daisy following a step behind him, he straightened his figure, inclining already to stoutness, and bowed with royal, impersonal reserve to the smiling crowd which made way for him. Coming to a table where a group of officers belonging to the Hussar regiment were standing drinking champagne, Boris bowed slightly to Daisy and turning about picked up a brimming glass and linking his arm through that of one of the young men definitely, if politely, dismissed her. Uncertain what to do and seeing no familiar faces, Daisy wandered on alone toward the Pompey Gallery. Coming to a narrow seemingly empty passageway, she extracted with some difficulty three safety pins from the tight twisted ribbon of her belt and in the shadow of a large, pink marble, gold-based pillar, bent to repair, as best she could, the damage of her gown. She did not notice the sound of footsteps, until glancing up she saw the Emperor within a few yards of her, accompanied by half a dozen aides crossing the threshold of the opposite door and coming directly toward her. There she stood petrified, holding the flounces of her pink tulle skirt in her two hands, like some scared young creature of the wild, breathless, believing if she made neither sound nor movement she might escape unseen. But the Emperor smiled, and half halted as if he would speak. As he passed he fixed full upon her his luminous, faithful, kindly eyes.

Daisy pulled up her long gloves and tried to appear unconcerned as she wandered back alone to the Malachite Hall. She recognized with relief the young

Princess Olga Goulieffski—Varia Bramtemberg's unmarried sister—an enormously fat girl with a lovely face, who had particularly befriended her at the old Princess Molotzina's ball. She was standing beside one of the long refreshment tables, which were loaded with dozens of different zakowska, sturgeon and ham and high crystal dishes filled with fresh caviar. She held a plate full of candies and cakes in one hand and a glass of essence of almond milk in the other. She was talking excitedly to a handsome young officer in the uniform of Her Majesty's Own.

"What are you doing?" she cried when she caught sight of Daisy," wandering about like a lost soul alone," and Daisy could not help feeling pleased at so familiar and kindly a greeting from the sister of the Duchess of Bramtemberg. Olga's partner gave Daisy a glass of the iced almond milk, which although rather sickish, on second taste was blandly refreshing. "Oh, I tore my dress and I went off to pin it up," Daisy answered Olga. "I couldn't find my way to the dressing rooms—such miles and miles."

"Have you seen your flirt Slavinsky? He's just over there in that gr-r-oup with the Grand Duke Boris," Olga continued, rolling her eyes, and turning her head in the opposite direction from the table in question.

"My flirt?"

"Don't pretend. . . . Silly! You know Captain Wimpel?" The young officer bowed and smiled to Daisy. "He is my fiancé. But my people won't let me marry him. They think he is not gr-r-and enough. You are much more lucky in America. None of you know who your grandfathers are. I cr-r-y my eyes out all day. Here, have one." And Olga held out her plate heaped with sweets and cake. Daisy unwrapped the cheap green paper

from a lemon drop and popped it into her mouth. "Have another." This time Daisy chose a blue-covered barley candy, and slid it down the front of her dress. "I'll keep it to remember you by when I get back to America," she said. Olga thought the incident immensely amusing and burst into excited laughter. "I love Americans—you have such nice, funny manners. I love every American I ever met. We met quite a lot last summer in Carlsbad. All excepting Isoldine Kamchatka—you see her standing over there talking to my sister Bramtemberg." She indicated a classic beauty in a beautiful green velvet dress. "She knows she bores my sister to death, but she doesn't care. She wants to be seen talking to her anyhow. She has no temperament."

"Oh, yes, mother just hates her too," Daisy replied, delighted with Olga's frank and easy speech. "We thought when we came she would be nice to us because we are Americans and she was born in Chicago, too. Mother asked her to something right away, but she refused cold. Her signature filled a whole page."

"*Très snob*," the young Captain interjected. He was not one of the fashionables; and although he understood English fairly well, did not like to risk speaking it.

"Oh, dear God, here comes mamma," Olga's fat, milky throat blotched crimson. "Come quick, Daisy, let's take arms and go back to the ballroom. I hear the music for the Polonaise."

Pleased to be seen arm in arm with Olga Goulieffski, Daisy passed close to the table before which the Grand Duke Boris was still standing, drinking champagne, and came face to face with Serge Slavinsky, who evidently was in the midst of an amusing story. All the officers, including Boris, were smiling and listening, with rapt attention. Olga pressed Daisy's arm.

Slavinsky stood a head taller than the Grand Duke. His smartly cut dark green coat, tight breeches and British made patent leather top boots, enhanced the beauty of his naturally tall, square-shouldered and slim-waisted figure. He clicked his heels as the two young girls passed, and bowed. Several officers turned their heads. Olga smiled indifferently. She disliked the Grand Duke, who, to please her family, whenever the occasion arose, pretended he either did not know Captain Wimple or else was pointedly cold in his manner. But Daisy caught her breath and gave herself away by the intense expression of her dark eyes.

"*Süsse-mädel*," murmured the amiable Grand Duke, who had just returned from a trip to Vienna. "*Nu—ja*." Slavinsky held out his glass to be refilled, and went on with his story.

At the door of the ballroom one of the Masters of Ceremony, ivory-tipped cane in hand, hurried forward and wrinkling his brow remonstrated with Daisy. "But, Mademoiselle—the *contredanse* is beginning. His Imperial Highness, the Grand Duke André, is waiting for you—you are late. This way—this way, please. You have seats quite near the Empress." Daisy curtsied to the Grand Duke André and sat down beside him, on a gilt chair against the wall. Unlike his elder brother Boris, he had a fresh, childish face and an unsophisticated manner. They sat in silence for Daisy was watching Slavinsky taking his place beside Varia Bramtemberg in the long line forming for the *contredanse*. André offered his arm shyly and with Daisy rose to take their places. Not far off at the head of the room the Empress sat alone, with that same stricken, frozen look on her face, an unreal and glittering apparition. At a little distance from her, her ladies stood each with a portrait of Catharine II encircled

with large diamonds pinned with a blue ribbon to her breast.

Opposite to Daisy and André danced the blond giant, the young Dimitri Kavelin, and his cousin Nathalie. Her pretty curved figure looked at its best in a pale gray and silver brocaded Worth gown. Her only jewels were a diadem of diamonds and her famous necklace of black pearls.

"I think Countess Nathalie is so charming," Daisy ventured timidly, as hand in hand she and André advanced to meet their vis-à-vis. But André, more anxious even than she to remember how to march correctly through the complicated figures of the polonaise, answered her nothing.

After the *contredanse* Slavinsky came to invite Daisy to waltz with him. She saw him making his way through the crowd, afraid to believe he was really coming for her. She found it difficult to follow him, for he danced out of time to the music. Tall as she was, she could feel his silver shoulder strap against her chin. When the dance ended she felt distressed and bewildered as if she had been rudely awakened from a delicious dream. He left her beside a group of young girls and, as he straightened up from his bow, "I am leaving for Paris to-morrow," he said, with that strange voice of his, clear, metallic, monotonous, all on one note. "I will be at the Hotel du Rhin just opposite your hotel."

"How do you know we stop at the Brisdom?"

"Sometimes I ask questions."

"But we aren't coming to Paris for ages."

"Then maybe I won't see you again."

Daisy parted her lips as if to question him, but she could think of nothing to say. She stood there radiant in her pink tulle dress, and gazed at him with startled eyes.

Just then the Grand Duke Boris coming up, clicked his

heels together, and silently offered his arm to Daisy. Together they joined the procession, headed by the Emperor and Empress, into the banquet hall. Daisy, with her royal partner, walked not very far behind the sovereigns into an immense white and gold marble pillared room, set with one hundred small round tables, which radiated off from a long central table, gleaming with candles and a massive gold service carved with the eagles of Peter the Great. From the floor, through the center of each table, sprang a tall palm tree. Around the rough bark, massed in golden bowls and vases, lay fresh jonquils and sweet violets and lilacs and tulips and roses and lilies from which the yellow pollen had already dropped and stained the damask cloth.

Daisy sat between the Grand Dukes Boris and Michael; next to Michael the Duchess of Bramtemberg; then a young general in the dark green uniform of the Emperor's suite; and Nathalie Kavelin. Next to her the Grand Duke André, and to his right an exquisite dark-faun-eyed young woman from the Georgian provinces, who looked like a very young girl, in spite of her wedding ring. Over her shoulder Daisy could see the long central table, at which sat the Empress, stony-faced and tragical under her flashing diamond crown. To her right sat the Turkish Ambassador, doyen of the corps, his red fez inclined to one ear. To her left the British Ambassador, Sir Charles Scott. By craning her head Daisy could see her mother's pure and lovely profile, her black hair like a raven's wing, piled high under her new diamond tiara. Daisy searched for a glimpse of her stepfather, and of the Emperor sitting opposite his consort, but the purple feather head-dress of an enormously fat old lady obstructed his view.

Sitting there in her sparkling tulle dress, between two cadets of the royal house, fascinated by the gorgeous pageantry and by the rank accorded her as daughter of

an Embassy, seventeen-year-old Daisy naturally did not pause to speculate upon the enormous and precise machinery which had worked for months, for years, behind the scenes to produce these few hours of unrivaled splendor. She was not curious about the millions of hands, and brains and money energized throughout the world toward this one, brief, magnificent conclusion. French farms, German factories, Riviera gardens, Swiss dairies, English beef, French, Italian, Spanish and German vineyards, Austrian bakeries, Indian pearl fisheries, and Siberian platinum, African gold and diamond mines; Rue de la Paix dressmakers, goldsmiths and jewelers of every nationality, Chinese silk, Spanish lace, English bootmakers, French hairdressers, Volga fisheries, Siberian furriers, gypsy musicians. Thousands of servants, counting the soldiers in parade uniform detailed from the various regiments to guard the Palace by hundreds, inside and out. Officials, officers, nobles, royalties. Two Sovereigns. All the flowers came from France in special trains, it was said. Daisy was merely glad they should be there.

The Grand Duke Michael (at that time the Czarevitch) turned over a stalk of fresh asparagus, brought from the royal hot-houses in the Caucasus, with his golden fork, and remarking in Russian to Nathalie Kavelin that it looked a trifle pale, he left it on his plate uneaten.

The temperature outside that night was twenty-five degrees Fahrenheit below zero, but ripe strawberries were served on rock crystal dishes mounted on stands of beaten gold, and Daisy refused them, because as she confided to Boris with whom she was beginning to feel almost quite natural, strawberries sometimes gave her hives. Daisy sipped a little of the golden wine, which Boris told her he liked for its name, "Liebesfraumilch," and she found it to her taste. She understood very little German and

asked Boris why he chuckled, while André's fresh cheeks waxed pinker, and the Czarevitch put down his glass and turned his grave, inhibited young face away. The conversation between the others at table was even more desultory than Daisy's broken talk with Boris. The lovely young creature sitting between André and the General barely opened her mouth even for food and drink. Countess Nathalie, vivid and gay in appearance, scarcely spoke at all; but occasionally she and the handsome young General beside her glanced deep into each other's eyes. Only the Duchess, like some bright-crested singing bird, burst into little light floods of words to which she herself paid no attention.

Daisy was thinking she had caught sight of Slavinsky's dark, sleek head across the crowd, when without warning, everyone at her table sprang to their feet. The Emperor, accompanied by two glittering aides-de-camp, was approaching their table, having stopped here and there at the various tables to eat a bite or drink a sip of wine among his guests. Following the ancient custom, the "Little Father" was playing the part of a real host, affectionate, solicitous and simple.

He was smiling, as he came up, and looking right at Daisy with his beautiful, faithful gray eyes. The next she knew the young General, behind his own chair, was standing at attention while the Emperor seated himself.

Nervously clutching her lace napkin in both hands Daisy sat down again with her eyes fixed upon the Emperor. "You were lost?" he questioned, his voice low and charming. Daisy was stunned to hear from those Imperial lips just ordinary everyday English spoken. Had pearls and rubies fallen from his mouth, rolling down upon the golden plate before him, she would have thought it the more natural phenomenon. And "Oh—Majesty" was all

she could stammer in answer. The Emperor smiled, kindly, absently, and turned to the lovely Georgian at his right hand. Faint blotches stained the young woman's throat as she murmured her reply to the Imperial question and her eyes were suffused as if she were about to cry. The Emperor's brother Michael and his cousins André and Boris had also lapsed into frigid silence. Nathalie laid her fork and spoon precisely upon her untouched plate, nervously smiling, and staring straight ahead. Varia Bramtemberg put her little handkerchief to her nostrils as if to inhale its perfume, twisted her graceful neck, rolled her eyes, and finally unable to bear the strain murmured something to the Grand Duke Michael, who inclined his head gravely but did not answer. The Emperor was asking another monosyllabic question of the lovely young Georgian beside him. Although she had turned quite pale she smiled this time and showed her dimples and looked at her Sovereign as she might have looked at God himself, and all the Saints—with rapturous eyes. Then it was that the Empress unreal and beautiful as some statue gleaming alone in the moonlight, braved a breach of court etiquette by glancing, once, then again, backwards over her shoulder. And the whole court, watchful as a cat, pounced upon the incident, and whispered slyly in broken sentences.

Immediately after supper the Emperor and the Empress, followed by their suites, proceeded through the bowing throng out of the grand ballroom, through the Pompey Gallery and back to their own apartments. The ball was ended.

Driving home Daisy sat grave and silent, hating the interruption of Oliver's amused questioning. Had she had a good time? Which of her royal partners had she liked

most? Did she say anything herself to the Emperor? Like whirling fire wheels the glowing pictures of the night spun in her mind. Deep and close she was covering a fixed question in her heart. Why had Slavinsky danced only once with her? And when she passed him there, standing beside the Grand Duke Boris, he had looked as if he hardly remembered her. And what was that he had said about Paris! He must know as well as she did that they were not planning to go to Paris for months to come.

On the way home from the Winter Palace, Mrs. Redmond leaned back in her own corner of the carriage and closed her eyes. "I guess I am going to be sick—grippe or something," she said, coughing into her handkerchief, "I feel sort of queer." Redmond pulled the fur robe up over his wife's knees, and made a motion to tuck it about her. But she pushed his arm away. Her Scotch-Irishness despised physical demonstrations of sympathy. Besides she had a natural contempt for illness and disease and classified them with poverty and failure.

The doctor, sent for that night, arrived next morning at about eleven—for a Russian fairly early. He had melancholy eyes and a sensitive, dark face. Redmond and Daisy watched him, each with a fur wrap on, in the glacial hallway outside Mrs. Redmond's door. In a thin, impersonal voice, he announced to them that Mrs. Redmond had pneumonia and he promised to find two nurses from the Eugenie Sisterhood who understood English. It was impossible to judge so soon the seriousness of her case, he said. One had always to wait for the crisis.

Because of a youthful desire to express her sympathy through some outward show of sacrifice, Daisy slept every night until the end, cramped up on a three-quarter length chaise longue in her mother's boudoir. During that week,

three or four times each night Oliver would wander into his wife's room, his ruddy face pinched, unshaven and worried, for he was a kind-hearted man and her suffering tortured him.

Toward morning on the eighth day Daisy was awakened by one of the nurses and told to come into the Ambassador's room. The Ambassador was already there, she said. Trembling with nervousness, wrapped in her wool dressing gown, she stood beside Oliver at Mrs. Redmond's bedside and gazed down on the strangely altered yet still poignantly familiar face. Mrs. Redmond's closed and sunken eyes looked as if they were already sealed for eternity, yet suddenly she fluttered the lids apart. "What are you doing here?" she asked. She tried to fix her gaze first on Oliver then on Daisy as if to compel an answer from them. Then the lids fluttered and closed again in spite of herself and lay still. Daisy dropped on her knees beside the bed—she was afraid to search under the covers for her mother's hand.

Oliver knelt beside her. Tears filled his eyes as he gazed upon his wife's face, altered so bitterly in the last few hours. But even as his ruddy cheeks blanched with sympathy and sorrow, like a rocket out of the night, a quiver of relief shot up from the depths of him and instantly vanished away. Mrs. Redmond's eyelids fluttered again but did not open, and breathing the words out in a long sigh, she asked if the mail had yet come from home. Oliver buried his face in his hands. He had never seen anyone die before. With a passionate surge of regret he wished that he had been kinder, more understanding.

"No, not yet. . . . It should be in this morning," he whispered. "I'll bring it up to you."

Mrs. Redmond murmured something they could not understand and then fell into a long silence. Daisy's knees

began to cramp, but she felt it would be indecent to alter her position. Her upper arms and thighs trembled spasmodically and she remembered they had trembled the same way that afternoon about a week before when she and Slavinsky had tarried behind, hidden by the marble pillars in the entrance hall. She felt physically sick and mentally distraught and she reproached herself because she could not actively feel the pain and burden of a great sorrow.

Finally Mrs. Redmond turned her head faintly to the side. "Well, I'm glad I left Chicago," she said, and these were the last coherent words she uttered.

The first great emotion of Daisy's life came next morning with the sight of her mother's dead face.

The Russian Court functionaries, who came to prepare the American Ambassadors for her coffin, had decked her out with a gorgeousness fitting her rank and station.

She lay in the middle of her own bed, a purple velvet and gold-fringed cover drawn up over the stately figure to the shoulders. The head, with its too familiar, too living, dense black hair rested upon a deep red velvet cushion. The face seemed infinitely withdrawn, remote, serene. The wide brow, the throat and chin, the lovely nose and the frozen nostrils were chiseled now with an agonizing refinement and purity of outline. They had touched the cheeks and the marvelous Greek mouth with rouge. Lilies in high silver vases and tall, lighted candles stood at the four corners of the bed. And the room smelled of pungent herbs and incense.

Daisy fell upon her knees and hid her face and tried, without avail, to pray with passionate sincerity.

PART THREE

DAISY sat by the empty grate in the sitting room of the same suite overlooking the Place Vendôme where, coming from the boat train, she had met her mother and stepfather nearly a year past. She sat alone, for Oliver had left the day before on a flying business trip to London. Letters and telegrams of condolence which she intended to answer that afternoon heaped the small marble-topped table beside her. A pile of calling cards, many marked in the formal French manner "P. C." (*pour condoler*); others with a more personal message, were scattered upon the floor. An open letter from Mrs. Schultz, postmarked Chicago, and a man's calling card lay together on her lap. The card, from Serge Slavinsky, had a penciled address, "Hotel du Rhin" written across the top.

Although she had never crossed the channel she dreaded the thought of it, she had told her stepfather. Besides, she needed to rest, she had said. Although she had been thinking fixedly of Slavinsky all these last days, planning to see him and talk to him again, engaged in an endless daydream, it was true she still suffered acutely from the shock of her mother's illness and death. The long mournful, semi-official journey south from St. Petersburg, and their first days in Paris had passed like a horrid dream. Sickening consultations; heartbreaking arrangements; hideous and grotesque phrases; "embalming"; "the body"; "the casket"; "mortuary services"; "blanket of violets." "Lead, Kindly Light" had been discarded at the last moment as gratuitously distressing.

She had been almost sincere in saying to Oliver that

she needed to be by herself for a little while; and she almost thought she told him the truth when she said she needed to rest and relax, to be for just a few days entirely alone. Yet such are the vagaries of the human mind that she felt a little hurt and surprised when her stepfather accepted her objections without any show of argument.

Her feelings for Oliver during the last week or so had begun to complicate. Sometimes his face looked strange; swollen, she thought, as if he had been drinking. And that last night before Oliver left for London she had caught a look when he kissed her cheek and said good-night which had made her heart turn over.

The little sitting room gave the impression of being suffocated with flowers; ceremonial flowers; stiff flowers; lilies and artificial looking roses. Flowers crowded together in unlovely hotel vases. Dressed in deep mourning Daisy looked both older and younger than her years. A fold of crêpe weighted down her long skirt and little bands of sheer white linen at the cuffs and collar were fastened on with black enamel "baby pins." She was thinking of Slavinsky, scrutinizing again the bold, perpendicular handwriting on his card, left only the day before. She felt bitterly disappointed because he had not called sooner. The New York Herald had published their arrival and a long notice of the funeral services for Mrs. Redmond in the American Chapel.

Daisy placed Slavinsky's card carefully on the little table beside her, and picked up Mrs. Schultz's letter again. It was filled with the sincerest messages of love and sympathy. Daisy would always be to Mrs. Schultz as one of her own daughters. Nothing could make her happier than if Daisy would come to live permanently with them. Greta was preparing for Vassar, the letter went

on, and Oscar had gone to Vienna to study medicine. He was living there with her sister Greta, Little Greta's god-mother. "If you need something, just you write him what you want," the letter concluded. "It's good to have home friends away from home."

But Daisy hadn't read through quite to the end before she crossed the room to peep through the long lace curtains at the row of windows opposite. She had been spying across at the Hotel du Rhin ever since the first hour they arrived in Paris. She never came in or went out of her hotel door without glancing over. One window on the second floor was open, but the room behind it looked significantly still and empty. Then she pulled open her own windows, and leaning out across the iron railing, pretended to gaze abstractedly up the Rue Castiglione to her right, and to her left across the maelstrom of traffic seething within the beautiful stone circle of the Place Vendôme. But from the corner of her eyes she noticed a squat looking man with a pale moon-face who had appeared framed in the open window. He stared straight across at her, alert, inquisitive as a chipmunk. Then he slipped back out of sight into the room again. Almost immediately Serge Slavinsky himself took the squat man's place and stood there in that dark, dramatic way of his, gazing unsmiling, directly at Daisy. When she turned her head slightly his way, he turned and disappeared once more within. Daisy lingered on, making a show of gazing, as if lazy-eyed, indifferent, up and down the congested street. But after she stepped back and closed her windows behind her, she rushed up and down the sitting room floor, flew into her bedroom, looked at herself in the glass, ran a comb through her hair and then squeezed behind her dressing table to peep once more at the hotel opposite. But Slavinsky's window had closed in the meantime. Not

a sign of life anywhere. He must have shown himself once more and shut the window, and in these few minutes she had missed him. Dared she send a note across? No. What would he, as a foreigner, think of her—a young girl, and in such deep mourning! When she sat down on the edge of the bed she was conscious of that odd trembling which had seized her once or twice in her life before. Then she bethought herself of appearances—the sitting room—papers and letters strewn all over the floor. What a mess to leave a room in! Supposing he were on his way to see her now! And the flowers—these oppressive, ceremonial flowers, their beauty and sweetness destroyed, clumped together so vulgarly in hideous vases everywhere. She staggered off with an enormous purple and green vase of calla lilies and left them on the floor in her bathroom, for he might already be upon the stairs. She snatched up telegrams and scattered letters and calling cards, and shoved them pell mell into the deep side drawers of the desk, and she dragged the small marble-topped table back to its place beside the sofa.

A knock sounded on the door. Daisy flew to the bathroom, sprinkled her fingers with eau de cologne and rubbed them hard on a rough Turkish towel. Must she offer Slavinsky a hand turned suddenly cold and damp from excess of emotion? Wouldn't a formal bow suffice? She was in such deep mourning. . . . But she felt her finger tips turn icy cold again as she ran across to open the sitting room door.

A squat, common-looking man with a large, pale face confronted her and presented an envelope addressed to her in Slavinsky's heavy handwriting. He bowed from the hips, Russian fashion, his slanting eyes bright with cunning. Then he lifted his chin in sly gesture toward the building across the way. "May I come to see you now?"

the note ran. "My valet will bring the answer. He doesn't speak anything, so just nod to him. Slavinsky." Conscious of those furtive eyes upon her, muddy blue, like the eyes of a white negro, and anxious to fascinate any one so close to Slavinsky as his valet, Daisy inclined her head in queenly fashion, and drew her lips into a small, sweet, formal smile.

Daisy expected Slavinsky to appear within the next few minutes, but he kept her waiting nearly an hour before he arrived. Two brilliant spots of color burned unevenly upon her cheeks when a loud knock finally announced him.

As Slavinsky sat down opposite Daisy on one side of the empty grate fire he adjusted his brown tweed trousers at the knees. His large, well-shaped feet were encased in a pair of immaculately polished tan shoes and faun-colored spats. His linen was perhaps conspicuous—dark blue with a brown stripe. He wore plain gold cuff links. But the head of his walking stick was overly large, and made of malachite. His brown soft hat and faun-colored gloves, which he had placed neatly together on a chair, were of sober English pattern. Still, it should be said that the man's appearance was naturally so striking that the detail of anything he carried or put on became immediately noticeable.

Slavinsky fastened his eyes on Daisy's tremulous face. "All in black," he said; "I am so sorry. And you are all alone?"

"Yes."

"No one with you? No old chaperon dr-r-r-agons about?"

"No. No one."

Her heart began to beat, heavy sickening thuds. He would get up now and take her in his arms, she thought.

"Your stepfather has gone over to London and left you all alone?"

"But only for a day or so," she defended. "I could have gone, too, if I'd wanted to, but I'm not an awfully good sailor. How did you know?"

"My valet is an old friend of your concierge."

"I thought your valet was deaf and dumb." She was taking courage again and met his eyes and smiled.

"He never talks until he is obliged to. . . . So you are quite alone? Have you no friends in Paris?"

"Oh, yes, lots," she prevaricated. "But I don't care to see anyone," and she indicated her black dress. "I've been to the Louvre. I . . . like to read."

He put the tips of his fingers together and gazed around the room. "What masses of flowers; I was sure you would have masses of flowers so I did not send you any. The scent is simply killing. But I will send you some violets tomorrow if you will keep them in your own room. You know I came to Paris on purpose to see you."

Daisy remembered in a flash their last conversation at the Court Ball, and although she realized he was far from the truth, she accepted the substance as she accepted the odd form of his speech, as fascinating and exotic, too remote from her own experience to judge by familiar standards.

"And do you eat here quite by yourself? Quite alone? . . . But it is horrid to dine alone," he persisted.

"I don't mind it at all."

"But let me dine with you tonight. You should not stay the whole time alone."

"Oh—no—I couldn't. My stepfather wouldn't like it and . . ." She glanced down again at her crêpe-edged skirt.

"But why does he leave you, then?"

"Oh, he's got lots of business in London. He's dreadfully busy."

Slavinsky rose, picked up his hat, stick and gloves, crossed the room and stood considering. "We'll go to the Bois and dine quietly," he announced after a little pause as if it were all settled.

"I can't do any such thing."

"Have you a maid? Is she about?"

"Well, only one by the day. I let her go home. I haven't a maid of my own yet, but we are looking for one," she ended lamely, thinking he might despise her for having no personal attendant.

"But then of course I will dine here with you." He looked slowly around the room as if not wholly satisfied. "But do have someone take out nearly all the flowers."

"My stepfather will be furious."

"That is unfortunate. But he might as well get used to me one of these days. I will come at eight."

He bowed from the threshold without offering to shake hands and closed the door behind him.

Daisy began her toilette as soon as Slavinsky left her. It lasted a long time; her hair alone took thirty minutes. She put on a thin black chiffon dress, with long transparent sleeves, cut down in a low V at the neck. Redmond has gone with her to Doucet's to order her mourning, and they had had quite a little argument about the trimming of this particular dress. Daisy had wanted the hem of the wide skirt bordered with crêpe, but Redmond thought her too young for such deep mourning. "Well, I won't wear it until later on," she had said, giving in with ill grace, for like most very young people she fancied herself in funereal attire. But neither could she resist wearing the dress prematurely on this occasion, for

she needed no one to tell her that transparent black makes an appealing contrast to a fresh white skin.

Yet when she stood up before the wardrobe mirror she looked so vivid and so pretty that her heart curiously misgave her, and she sat down suddenly on a straight chair and decided she would send a note across to Slavinsky and tell him not to come. But, noticing how neatly the narrow grosgrain ribbon of her tiny belt clipped in her waistline, she could not but change her mind again. "Well, the buckle is in dull black beading. Dull black beads are real mourning," she thought, and she picked up a comb and ran it through her back hair, and gazed at herself, hesitating to believe she could be so pretty. "Black is certainly becoming," she thought, looking at herself sidewise, and she expanded her chest to improve the outline of her figure. But it was not yet seven o'clock. What should she do with herself? How could she pass the next interminable hour?

Daisy pulled open the wardrobe door and, fumbling among the cartons there, picked out a charming little hat trimmed with a large crêpe bow, and snatched a long, enveloping cloak from one of the hooks. She would go for a walk by herself, in the all but faded dusk, along the Tuileries Gardens. Although her stepfather's last request had been, just before leaving, that she should not go out on the streets unaccompanied by her maid, she had privately intended to venture about as much as she liked alone.

Daisy walked out of the Brisdom Hotel to the corner of the rue Matabor. There she gave a furtive back glance, and saw that the concierge, standing by the doorway, was watching her. She turned to the right along the rue St. Honoré. When two men at the corner stared close into her face, she was conscious of a sickish wave of excite-

ment. She saw herself as in a mirror, tall, mysterious, blond and very young; all in black and walking alone. She had never been alone before on the streets of either Paris or St. Petersburg.

A good-looking well-dressed man whispered "Belle enfant" in her ear as he passed by from behind. He paused by a shop window (already shuttered at that hour) and boldly stared, evidently waiting for her. An empty fiacre with the hood pulled down came along the street, and pulling up short the coachman tried to hail her, although she kept her eyes upon the pavement, and unconsciously, as she walked, she began to exaggerate the natural undulation of her slender thighs.

At the corner of the rue Cambon she turned to her left and then skirted along the Place de la Concorde under the arcades.

Deep in her new rôle, glancing neither to the right nor the left, she walked along, conscious to her finger-tips of every one who glanced her way. And coming finally to the Champs Elysées; bosky with new green, and winking and brilliant with light, she turned for no reason in a sudden panic and fled back, retracing her steps.

At ten minutes to eight, as she stood in her room again before her dressing table, her heart jumped at the sound of a discreet knocking at the sitting room door. Her collar loose, a towel round her shoulders, her hair in a golden cascade rippling down almost to her knees, she heard the familiar sound of a table, silver and china tinkling, dragged across the floor. Waiters' voices. Dinner? But who had ordered dinner? It must be some mistake. Should she have ordered? But Oliver often didn't approve the table d'hôte. Well, she hadn't time to think, she told herself, she had to do her hair all over again after wearing a hat, and she stooped to pick up a long shell hairpin

from the floor. There was no one in the sitting room when she came in, a few minutes later. A little table strewn with violets had been drawn up in front of the sofa. Two places were set, side by side. In the center, a bowl of jonquils. On the napkin of one plate a delicious, great bunch of moist violets. And a menu already written niched in its porcelain holder.

But the little formal clock on the mantelpiece struck the half hour past eight and still Slavinsky had not come. There must have been some awful accident, she argued with herself, or could she have utterly mistaken what he had said to her? And she peered again and again through a slit in the curtains at the lighted windows just opposite.

Her eyes were enormous; brilliant with a fever of apprehension and impatience. "If I could only always look this way," she thought, turning back from the mirror for the twentieth time to the window, for her prettiness had come upon her so recently she had not yet learned to believe in it.

But it was a quarter before nine before Slavinsky finally knocked upon her door. Daisy rushed across the room and flurried down in a straight-backed chair beside the fireplace and pretended to be reading a book as he entered.

He kissed her hand and released it coolly without adding a word of apology. "In that dress you are really prettier than ever." His smile was charming, but it somehow lacked warmth, she felt instinctively. He glanced across at the table. His face was as pale as the gardenia in his buttonhole and his eyes looked extraordinarily black and rather sunken. He gave his hat and coat to the maitre d'hôtel who stood waiting by the door, and picking up the menu from the table fixed his attention upon it.

Petite Marmite
Truite au Bleu Sauce Hollandaise
Noisette d'agneau
Pomme nature Flageolets
Pâté de fois gras
Salade endive et laitue
Glacé au fraises

"Charming dinner, Nursery dinner. Although I am a Russian I like clean simple food, and . . . Maitre d'hôtel, attention!"

He raised a warning finger. "We will want one maybe two—I don't know—bottles of Steinberg Cabinet, 1878. By the way, how much have you left? And the usual champagne."

"Oh, have you stopped at this hotel, too?" queried Daisy.

"I ordered beforehand so as not to keep you waiting. Besides, what should a little filly like you know about ordering a dinner?" Slavinsky appeared not to have heard her question, and he gave a little twist to his white tie as he glanced at himself in the mirror. As the maitre d'hôtel left the room a young pale waiter came in, carrying a cooler of champagne. Slavinsky walked to the flower-strewn table and stood there staring down upon it. Then he glanced across at the serving table set beside the door, then to the waiter. Suddenly he thrust forward his narrow chin.

"Faut-il que je te dis mille fois de server le vodka avant que moi j'arrive? Ps-sscr-r-ee . . . Nom d'un. . . ."

And he raised his open hand as if to strike. He spoke in his usual light staccato monotone, each syllable on the same note, but with a deadly intentness. And the waiter turned and fled from the room.

"You have kept me waiting an hour. I think it's too late

to have dinner now," said Daisy, dropping her head and looking very sulky. Slavinsky came across and smiled at her and drew her arm through his as she rose to her feet.

"American ladies are always so beastly late. I thought of course you would be late getting dressed, too. I forgot you are only a little girl," he answered her. "Come, let's sit down. I am beastly hungry."

"It's so late now it isn't worth while having dinner," Daisy repeated, but she sank down obediently in the narrow space he indicated behind the table.

"Why did you get into such a rage with that poor, sick-looking waiter?" she persisted, unfolding her napkin.

"I was officer in the Russian army for fifteen years. I believe in discipline."

"I hear Russians treat their servants like dogs," she went on. "Do you beat that queer valet of yours?"

"Nearly every day—that's why he adores me."

Two waiters appeared, one with a tray of vodka and small glasses, and the other with soup plates and tureen. Slavinsky, who had not yet sat down, drank three or four glasses of vodka in quick succession. "I'm rather tired," he said. "I have had all kinds of adventures since I left you."

"Adventures? What adventures?"

But, turning aside her question, he seated himself beside Daisy and then, drawing the cushion of the sofa out from under him, threw it aside upon the floor. "Do they think I'm a dwarf?" he said.

"I find it very difficult to talk to little girls," he observed, sitting back after he had finished his soup.

"Aren't you going at least to try?" Daisy tried shyly to tease him.

"But of course. What do you think would be nice to talk about? . . . *Non, montrez la bouteille avant de la*

déboucher," he interrupted himself, and taking a dusty bottle from the sommelier's hand, he himself unwrapped the napkin and scrutinized the label, then turning back continued: "Yes, I find it not easy to talk to little girls, little snowfields like you."

"You use such funny expressions," Daisy said, smiling for the first time.

"But why should every one use the same expressions? I use my own expressions in five different languages. Tell me, little snowfield, what you do now? Are you going to live on with your step-papa?"

She drooped her eyes and made a small sad mouth. "I have nowhere else to go."

"You have no independence?"

"Independence?"

"You could not leave him if you wanted to?"

"Of course I could. Any time I want to. But I don't want to. Mother left me all her fortune. It isn't very much but it used to keep us both. It ought to keep me alone."

"And you are the only child?"

"Why, yes." Daisy felt vaguely uneasy. Chilled as though a hidden window had opened to the damp night air.

The sommelier moved forward to Slavinsky's side, gripped the bottle of Rhine wine between his black aproned knees, and drew forth the cork tenderly. He poured enough to cover the bottom of Slavinsky's glass and stepping backward paused dramatically for the verdict.

"*Kolossal—merveilleux—angel's drink.*" Slavinsky inhaled the aroma voluptuously. "*Servez Madame.*"

Although charmed by the appellative, Daisy shook her head stubbornly and covered her glass with her fingers.

"But you must taste it. But it is a great honor just to sit in the same room with such wine."

"I don't like the taste of wine."

"But you never tasted anything like this. Maybe you will live all your life and never have the chance to taste anything like this again. I ordered it especially for you. Why do you disappoint me?" And he beckoned to the sommelier to fill her glass.

"How could you order it especially for me when I——"

"Taste it."

"No, I don't want to."

"But taste it."

She felt the impact of his will against hers. Then she closed her eyes and swallowed blindly until, when the glass was half empty, he stayed her hand.

"Fragrant? Smooth" (he pronounced it "smooz") "like cream! Golden liquid, is it not? But you drink as if you were just thirsty. As if you had no palate—no tongue—no nose—and you have really a charming nose. *Il faut apprendre à déguster.*"

He spoke of each dish as it came along, breaking off in the middle of any sentence to fix his attention upon the platter which, before serving, the maitre d'hôtel presented to him. On the whole they talked very little. Slavinsky spoke of his estate in the Ukraine. "It is an enormous rolling country. Wonderful stag-hunting country. Lots of woods and lots of water," he said. "Most lovely in summer, lilacs and nightingales. People won't believe what quantities of nightingales we have in South Russia. My castle is not the largest in the world. It is not the handsomest perhaps, but it is quite comfortable. You will see it perhaps some day."

Daisy turned her eyes away. She felt some special significance in his tone.

Towards the end of dinner she felt a bewildering cleavage in her very personality—a double vision of herself, as if from faulty focus. She was vividly conscious that a young lady dressed all in romantic black sat there on the sofa and toyed with a strawberry ice. Occasionally this interesting young person met Slavinsky's ever more meaning glances with heavy, evasive eyes. Although each time her gaze penetrated into Slavinsky's she, the original Daisy, turned sick with nervous apprehension and a longing to escape; yet this fascinating young person in black continued to smile languorously and to play with the little frill upon her breast.

Slavinsky filled her glass again and she leaned back and pushed her ice to one side.

"No, I don't want any more."

"Finish this while I drink my brandy. This is real Napoleon brandy, but I will not give you any because little girls do not understand brandy. They only make faces and cough and swallow it the wrong way."

He raised her glass to her protesting lips. After the sweet strawberry ice the wine tasted bitter. "I must open the window," she said. But instead of making the first effort to rise, she took the glass from his hand again and finished it, making a wry face as if it were bad medicine. Then she swayed back upon the cushions, shielded her eyes with one hand and tried to rouse herself against the sickening waves of dizziness which were beginning to overwhelm her. Slavinsky poured himself out carefully, so as not to lose one drop, a second precious brandy. Sipping from a wide-brimmed shallow glass he inhaled the biting aroma.

Presently a thin flame swept across his forehead and his nostrils turned rigid as if carved in stone. He set his glass aside and took Daisy in his arms, and as her head

fell back upon his shoulder he kissed her hair and throat with the same deliberate savoring with which he had, earlier in the evening, tasted the first drops of golden Rhine wine. Daisy crossed her knees. She crossed her arms upon her breast. She tried to turn her head aside, to rise, to get free. All the inhibitions of her teaching and the inheritance of her race rose to defend her. But when he found her still resisting lips they opened like the petals of a stubborn flower. One corner of her mind warned her ceaselessly like the pealing of a bell.

When he rose from beside her and she heard him cross the room and turn the key in its lock she fell back, limp among the cushions, as if to prove to her inner self that she was indeed no longer responsible.

She felt his suffocating weight upon her breast. With all her strength she made one last effort to get free. But he held her easily and she slipped, half supported in his arms, to the floor. Even as he pinioned her down he reached for the pillow which he had himself thrown from the sofa and raising her head slipped it beneath. And although she had ceased to struggle, she still lay with her eyes tight shut and her knees pressed together. But suddenly she felt his muscles relax, and opening her eyes she saw that he had raised himself on his elbow and was looking down upon her.

The quantity of heavy wine he had drunk at dinner had produced a soporific rather than a stimulating effect. And he began to question himself. Might he not be letting himself in for more serious complications than he cared to negotiate? Better not proceed too fast. Besides, he had always retained his prejudice against the deflowering of a virgin—a virgin of his own class, that is. It was complicated. It was superfluous. And this girl, for all her American “education,” was certainly inexperi-

enced. How childish, weak, uncertain, her lips against his kisses.

He glanced again at Daisy lying as if unconscious in the hollow of his arm, and then rose abruptly to his feet. He straightened down his waistcoat before the mirror and smoothed back the waves of his hair.

Then he stooped and picked up the inert figure and deposited it upon the sofa among the cushions. But before he moved away he felt with satisfaction the thick, wild beating of her heart. Daisy opened her eyes and stared at him, pale and truly horrified.

"Oh, what have you done, what have you done?" she cried.

He was picking up his hat and stick, and he slung his coat across his arm before he answered. "Why that's just it—nothing. I have done nothing at all."

"Oh, yes. Yes, you have." She could not bear to see him so cool, detached, so wholly untouched, sauntering toward the door.

"But then, my little snowfield, you know you should not wear thin, black dresses like that." He smiled and bowed, and without offering to shake hands turned and quietly closed the door behind him.

Daisy sprang to her feet, rushed across the room and into the hall. He was already at the landing, preparing to descend the stairs.

"Oh, Slavinsky! Please. . . ."

"Yes?" He stood there, sardonic, impatient, as if he had expected her. "What do you want?"

She took a few steps forward, beseeching him. "Oh, I don't know; I don't know," she said, her voice just above a whisper.

But he turned deliberately and pursued his way, and when he came to the landing of the entresol he straightened his tie before the mirror.

Daisy had just finished her bath toward dinner time next day when she heard the reverberation of the lift door, outside in the hall; her stepfather's voice; and his valet giving directions to the porters. She rushed into the sitting room just as she was, in a cotton bathrobe, and flung herself into Redmond's arms. The exuberance of this lovely young ward of his, Redmond found at times to be extremely disconcerting. He turned his eyes away now as he released her, and crossed the room, and almost his first words to Daisy were: "I had a cable from my sister Sarah. She is sailing to join us at the end of the week. I was afraid she never would make up her alleged mind."

"I wish she wasn't coming, Oliver, we would be so happy, just we two together," Daisy answered, fingering the hem of her sleeve. How clean and ruddy he looked, and masculine and comforting. In a rush of remorse and gratitude she longed to relate the whole story of yesterday evening. Just then she would have promised never to see Slavinsky again, if Redmond had only asked it of her. But he walked away to the window with his back turned, looking down to the street.

"But I suppose it can't be helped. I've got to have a chaperone," she added plaintively.

"No, it can't be helped," he answered, clipping his words in the manner which had once so delighted Susan Shawn.

Daisy hesitated a moment and when he had seated himself she perched beside him on the arm of his chair. They talked about his journey. And what had she been doing? And had she been lonesome, he asked. Had she seen any one or done anything amusing?

"But have you had dinner? Where shall we dine to-night?" she interrupted. "Let's go to Voisin's," and she

stroked his hair, as she remembered that Slavinsky had told her he always dined at Voisin's whenever he went to a restaurant.

"I remembered to order a table at Larue's before coming upstairs," said Oliver.

"But Voisin's is much nearer." She slipped one arm around his shoulder and laid her cheek against his. "Please let's go there. I'd love to see the proprietor, Brassersac, with his black tie and melancholy old eyes."

"Brassersac! Whoever told you about Brassersac?" But without waiting for an answer Oliver rose abruptly and turned off toward his own door across the hall.

"Don't tease like a silly baby," he said. "Hurry up now and get dressed."

Half an hour later Daisy, still in her dressing gown stuck her head through the door. "The worst is over," she said.

Oliver, already dressed, was seated beside the lamp and was looking over the long script of the weekly bill, which had just been delivered by the page boy, while Daisy ran back to slip into a street dress, and pin on her hat.

"One hundred and sixty-five francs bill from Houbigant. What on earth do you want to smell yourself up like that for?" Oliver called out to her. Feminine accessories, not to say superfluities, had always beguiled him, but he felt he should hold Daisy to conventional account in the absence of any other official chaperone.

"Goodness! I don't see how it could be that much. I meant to pay for it out of my own money. You know, Oliver, I never had any perfume before, anyhow. Mother wouldn't let me. This is *Peau d'Espagne*." He could hear the tiny hissing of the atomizer. "Smell it?"

"No, not yet, but it's sure to be awful. What does a nice young girl like you want with strong perfume?"

Daisy did not answer. She was busy pinning up a thick wave of hair to the tilted brim of her hat.

"They're terrible cheats in this hotel," Oliver went on. "Every week they stick on something that doesn't belong here."

"I know it. They're awful." Daisy's voice sounded as if she had moved to the far side of the room. She was holding her breath while her maid fastened together the hooks of her tiny ribbon belt. "Last week they charged for our remise when I'd paid the coachman myself from my own pocket."

"Why, they got a charge down for two hundred and fifteen francs for—why, for dinner last night. Did you have guests? or what?"

No answer.

"Well, they make me damn mad, these people. While you're finishing up I'll go down and see the manager. Two hundred and fifteen francs for your dinner. It's the same story with variations every week. Meet me downstairs."

As the sitting room door shut Daisy sat down, very suddenly, upon her bed. At the first moment she was too bewildered to think at all. How could she have been such a fool as to forget the bill. She could have paid for the dinner herself and taken it off the account. Why hadn't she just told him straight out!

Then she picked up her skirts, lifted her chin and disdaining the little elevator walked slowly down the narrow winding stairs.

Her stepfather was standing by the doorway with his back turned toward her. As she approached he started on ahead and stood by the brougham drawn up before the door silently until she got in.

"I think it's cold. Don't you think we should pull up

the window?" she asked tentatively after the horses had started.

"So that Slavinsky came here to dine with you last night! I thought when you asked to be left alone I could trust you." Oliver's voice was husky with various suppressed emotions.

Silence.

"Does he want to marry you?"

"Why, yes," she answered faintly.

"Has he said so?"

"Oh, Oliver, why do you talk to me this way?"

"I had forgotten you had even met him. Was it once? Twice? I must say this is a big surprise."

"Why, Oliver, I saw him much more often than that. I think? . . ." She broke off and then added in a tight small voice. "I was always mad about him, Oliver. Ever since old Princess Molotzina's ball. You don't know how I've thought about him—every hour of every day. And all night too."

They were approaching the Madeleine. Oliver unfolded his handkerchief and blew his nose violently.

"Daisy," he went on, forcing his voice to its natural tone. "I'd rather see you dead—almost, than married to that man. You haven't any conception—you haven't the first idea of what a man like Slavinsky is really like. Or what his life is—you haven't any idea. Why, a Chinaman or a Turk is just as close to our kind."

"Oliver, we haven't time to talk it over now."

Deep down merging in the border line of his subconscious mind, Oliver recognized a flash of shame akin to fear. "My own dead wife's child," he reproached himself, as he followed Daisy through the revolving glass doors of the restaurant.

Daisy had not the first hope of seeing Slavinsky at

Larue's that night, for the simple reason that he had told her that when he dined *en ville* he always went to Voisin's. But when she caught sight of his black head and lean ivory-white face there at the end of the room to the left she was neither shocked nor truly surprised, he had become so integral a part of her thoughts and inner being.

Redmond did not recognize him until he and Daisy were already seated in the corner directly opposite and it was too late to move. At Slavinsky's right on the divan against the wall sat Varia Bramtemberg; to his left Nathalie Kavelin. Opposite on a chair, his huge shoulders unaccustomed to plain black evening clothes, sat Nathalie's cousin, Dimitri Kavelin. Kavelin turned around, half rose from his seat, and as all four Russians bowed together, Redmond was unable to demonstrate his ill-will to Slavinsky excepting by the gravity of his smile, which was accepted by the ladies and Kavelin as only becoming in a husband so recently bereaved. Kavelin, who thought it unmannerly to stare as he wished over his shoulder, glanced repeatedly at Daisy's reflection in the mirror. "*Appetitlich*," he said finally, twisting off a piece of bread and stuffing it in his mouth with a muscular hand, decorated by three star sapphire rings and a thin gold bracelet. Varia Bramtemberg turned her long neck and absently dropped her pearl-studded bag, upon the extreme edge of the table. The maitre d'hôtel had just picked it up from the floor for the third time. She looked exceedingly elegant in a pale gray chiffon dress and an immense hat trimmed with a long black paradise, which wafted about whenever she turned her head.

"Tell me, Slavinsky," she fluted in her boy soprano voice, "aren't you marrying the little Redmond? I think heavy mourning becomes her. She has quite an enormous

fortune, left her by her mother, hasn't she? Her mother was very handsome but quite common. Redmond is half in love with the girl himself, they say. You know, I think he is attractive. He has such nice white teeth and such a nice thick neck." She pushed her champagne glass aside and the little bag poised on the edge of the table, fell to the floor again. She watched it go without lifting a finger to stop it.

This time Kavelin picked it up and scowling put it in his pocket. Countess Nathalie, dressed in the height of the fashion of that day, wore a tight black taffeta redingote which showed to advantage the curves of her charming figure; a lace bordered standing collar and ruffled lace jabot. On her head, inclined to one side perched a wide black hat heavy with white lilacs.

After a violent scene with her elderly husband and another with her aunt, the old Princess Catherina, Nathalie had definitely broken with Slavinsky. Standing by the buffet at the last court ball of the season at St. Petersburg, a glass of champagne in her hand while a dozen eyes furtively watched the proceedings, she had whispered in stiff monosyllables that she could not come to his flat again because her husband had set spies upon her. "But we will remain friends," she had beseeched him, looking at him with brown eyes close to tears.

"But of course." Slavinsky just raised his glass as if to seal the compact. "It is the only possible friendship between a man and a woman—the friendship of former lovers."

It was understood, however, by all five of them that the affair was definitely over. Even Redmond had heard the story in London from a French diplomat with whom he had dined at White's Club. But sitting beside Slavinsky Nathalie looked suddenly quite tired and pale and her

heart beat thick and fast when Varia gossiped of his marriage. She glanced across at Daisy. Even from across the room her small head with its ardent coloring bloomed like a flower. She wondered whether it were true that she would inherit a large fortune from her stepfather, and arriving at the end of a train of thought obscure to herself she asked Slavinsky whether he had really sent to England for a pack of hounds as somebody had told her. Slavinsky answered that the hounds were already on the way and added that he intended to send Jim Marsten to Ireland to pick up a dozen new hunters. Both ladies exclaimed, and "But of course," cried Nathalie, "Marston, I remember Jim Marston. He was with my uncle Adamanski for several years."

"And I remember him too—but perfectly well!" A dreamy look came over Varia's tilted face. "I remember thinking at the time he must have *un temperament de tous les diables*. You know riding men are gifted that way."

The four Russians rose before Redmond and Daisy finished their coffee. They passed across the narrow room to speak a word of greeting and murmured condolence.

"Won't you both come in to tea one afternoon," asked Varia, with her penetrating sweetness of voice and manner. "To-morrow perhaps or next day? at the Ritz?" But Redmond refused without any pretense of regret, saying that as they were sailing for America within the week, they were over-pressed for time.

Next morning Daisy came into the sitting room braced for a scene. She had dressed herself in street clothes, and as if to add a further touch of formality she carried her gloves and hat in her hand. Rather red in the face and uncomfortable, Oliver sat by the fire pretending to read

the Figaro. Daisy noticed that the egg on his breakfast plate was untouched.

"Now, Oliver," she began, her manner very crisp and bright, "what is all this about sailing for America?"

"Before you came downstairs last night," he answered, speaking with slow precision, "I received a cable from my office which—ah—necessitates my sailing for New York at once." He set his ruddy mouth in a hard line.

"I don't believe you, Oliver." She perched herself on the arm of the opposite chair and twisted and untwisted her gloves.

"Well, of course, I don't really mean that," she weakened, catching the stony look on his face. "But Oliver, listen. Why should I go with you, Oliver? I would just be in your way. Isn't your sister coming right over? How long will you be gone, Oliver?"

"Oh, I don't know. I am pretty well fed up with Europe."

"But why couldn't I stay over a little while with Miss Redmond? I am dying to go to Italy. I don't know anybody in New York, Oliver, and I am in mourning and everything."

Redmond put down his paper and reaching across took Daisy's resisting hand in his warm, confident clasp. Inwardly he felt anything but clear in his mind as to Daisy's future. Ever since dawn that morning he had been thrashing about seeking a proper solution. Of course he could rent a nice large house in New York, and arrange for Daisy and his sister to live with him permanently. He could bring the girl out in due course of time when she was through with her mourning, take her to Newport, go through the whole conventional rigmarole, and try to steer her as soon as possible into a suitable marriage. Mrs. Rutherford would certainly be willing to take Daisy

under her wing. The same Mrs. Rutherford who, after a chance meeting with Susan Shawn in Chicago, had invited her to dine in New York and placed him next to her at table. On purpose. . . .

Then again he would tell himself that after all this girl was nothing to him; had no claim on him whatsoever. Merely the stepdaughter of a mistaken marriage. Why shouldn't she go back to Chicago from whence she came! Had she really no relatives there at all? Should he then saddle himself with this new responsibility just when he was once more free?

On one point he was consistently clear. It was his duty to get the girl out of Europe without delaying one unnecessary hour. Yet strangely, though he knew perfectly well that his plans were laid in utter good faith, he could not rid himself of a stumbling sense of self-distrust, of brooding apprehension. Before he had quite finished his coffee he sent a cablegram to his sister, Miss Redmond, telling her not to sail after all as they were instantly returning. He further requested her to engage a suite at the Plaza Hotel, large enough to accommodate all three.

All of this whirled around once more in Oliver's mind as he relaxed his hold on Daisy's fingers. "My dear," he answered, "I would just as leave throw a baby to a pack of wolves as leave you behind me, here alone."

Daisy rose and standing before a mirror pinned on her hat with trembling fingers. With her hand upon the handle of the door, she turned, and not quite able to meet his eyes, she said: "I am sorry, Oliver, I am going to stay right here; nothing can budge me." She made as if to go out and paused again. "Oh, did you get a note from Serge Slavinsky this morning?"

Oliver, silent, continued to read his paper. "Well, you

will. He wrote me and said he was writing to ask you if you would see him this afternoon. I guess from what he said to me that he is going to ask you to let him marry me. You see you sort of hurried things up by saying you were sailing so soon. I am going out now to walk by myself in the Tuileries; and, Oliver, I am going to marry Serge. You might as well—you see, I don't care for anything else in the world."

Followed weeks of sordid argument and quarreling. Sometimes with hysterical raging, and sometimes with slow self-pitying tears Daisy refused point-blank to leave Paris. "You cannot move me by force, can you? You aren't my legal guardian, are you? Mother never said you should be.

"Well, mamma liked him," she would argue. "I guess she knew. All the nicest women in Petersburg are his friends. Nathalie Kavelin and the Duchess of Bramtemberg and the old Princess Catherina, they are all his best friends."

"Oh, that's part of the game," sneered Oliver. "They all stand together when a marriage like this comes on the tapis. Of course *women*! Slavinsky has plenty of women friends—who ever denied that? Maybe we'd better not go into that, all over again. But I've never heard a man speak well of him.—Have you?"

Within the next few days when he saw that Daisy could not be moved from Paris except by force, Oliver once more changed his plans. He would stay where he was; he would roll out before Daisy as much of the ugly truth as he could discover about Slavinsky, and settle once and for all this school girl's infatuation.

Oliver engaged a lawyer, who in turn hired several detectives. And presently together they unearthed letters

she would not read, copies of debts and mortgages she refused to understand, and photographs from which she turned her eyes. Triumphantly they produced the birth certificate of a girl child born to one Phyllis Burke. Letters addressed to Miss Phyllis Burke, St. John's Wood, London. Daisy recognized the bold vertical writing. A photograph of a baby girl in a frilly lace dress, looking out with a pair of intense eyes from under a mask of strangely thick dark curls. "Slavinsky acknowledges the child in one of these letters," Oliver said, speaking very gently. "I believe he sent one hundred pounds to the mother before the child was born. The original draft is here."

"Well, that was very nice of him," cried Daisy, and white-lipped, with one sweep of her arm, she brushed the mass of papers off the table to the floor. She fought like a cornered wild thing, insensate, unyielding; deaf and blind to fact and argument.

"I don't care and I don't believe you, and I would not care if it were true." And constantly on her lips the bitter cry of youth, misunderstood, misunderstanding. "Leave me alone! You don't understand! Leave me alone, why can't you? You don't understand me. I want to be alone."

On his side Slavinsky's vanity was at stake, now that the engagement was an understood, if not openly acknowledged, fact. The little drama piqued and amused him. He opened his own channels of information and ascertained that Redmond's fortune was more substantial than he had even hoped for. He heard, too, that the American was infatuated with his step-child; he believed, following a course of reasoning, clear in his own mind, that once he had married Daisy, Redmond could be cajoled into the most docile and generous of guardians. Besides, Daisy's passionate loyalty rather took his fancy, and her

vibrant slender figure, and the luxury of her tawny hair began to tease his senses.

But now that they were semi-officially engaged, Slavinsky became very circumspect as to their meeting places. They met in the long spring twilight in the Luxembourg Gardens. They walked along the quay at noontime. Sometimes they kissed, beneath the arches, lost in the chilly shadows of Notre Dame. Amused, indifferent, he would tell her after she had done with her excited account of the day's proceedings that Oliver Redmond was perhaps right; perhaps wrong; who could judge? But little girls had best not try to understand the laws of nature; nor why the sun rose and set; nor the secrets of plant life; nor metallurgy, nor history, nor the lives of wicked men, because it was all useless, and contributed nothing to their feminine charm.

PART FOUR

AN enormous country rolling limitless. Streams. Forests. Ponds. Swelling fields. Farm lands. Familiar things. Yet the feel of the Orient drifting, stealing along the edge of an infinite horizon. Away far off the golden dome of a Russian church glowed in the heart-breaking purity of early light.

The station of Proskurow on the main line from Warsaw to Odessa. Five o'clock of a limpid summer morning. First came Jacob clambering down the steps of the commodious Russian sleeping car, swamped beneath a mass of rugs and coats and traveling bags. Then Daisy's new French maid clutching in one hand Daisy's new waterproof covered dressing case; stamped upon its side a gold princess's closed crown glistened in the early sunlight. Dumping his burdens out of his arms on the platform, Jacob swarmed back again to help Daisy descend. She appeared alone. Still too young to show actual lines of fatigue, yet prophetic shadows under her eyes and about her mouth blighted the freshness of her face. The heavy honey-colored hair she had gathered none too tidily under a pretty black straw, tricorné hat. One little wisp straggled along her cheek, and she carried her gloves together carelessly in one hand.

Daisy took a deep breath of the sweet, pungent, exciting air, and then started to walk forward uncertainly down the dirty wooden platform. She paused and glanced back over her shoulder. Two *Tscherkeska* servants in top boots and baggy blue trousers rushed across at a sign

from Jacob and half kneeling, ardently embraced the left sleeve of her gray tweed jacket.

Halfway down the platform in front of the third class waiting room some Russian Jews, tragic, lean, in greasy kaftans under which their shoulder blades and elbows stuck out painfully, stood clustered together. Two or three of their women hovered in the background, brilliant-eyed under their woolen wigs. Half a dozen children hid behind their mothers, rosy-cheeked at first glance, yet unhealthy and under-nourished in reality, as if the red bloom were thinly painted on pale wax. At sight of Daisy they stirred and whispered words which seemed to involve only the more obscure regions of their throats. They had all heard of the arrival of the bride; the new Princess Slavinsky, the rich American. One of the families had a relative in America who had made a big fortune writing little songs any one could sing, and he had got so rich he had money to buy out the whole Slavinsky estate. Maybe this young American girl might straighten out the Prince's mortgages and pay off the more pressing of his debts. Maybe she might tear down the hovels in which they lived, put up marvelous sanitary buildings like those the uncle in America had described. Such things had been done by Americans many times before. Anyhow they had wanted to come down to the station to get a good close look at the American bride. It was well to see at first hand. With thick bundles filled with old rags and rotten vegetables, pretending to take the noon train so that the station master would not molest them, they had hung around all night.

The wood fire from the engine let out a volume of pungent spark-flecked smoke. The whistle screamed thrice across the country-side. Two Tartar waiters in white jackets, flat-faced, inscrutable, like blood brothers

to Jacob, scrambled down to the platform from the restaurant car. In the middle of the platform, nervous, embarrassed, not knowing which way to turn, Daisy lingered, conscious of dozens of furtive eyes.

A small delegation of peasants, men, women and children, had collected to welcome the master and his bride. At their head two graybeards, gayly smocked, holding their caps reverently in both hands, an ancient custom, coming down from serf days. Half a dozen railroad officials stood apart in yet another group. A handsome, blond peasant woman, no longer quite young, in vivid costume, barefooted, stood to one side and stared at Daisy more boldly than the rest. She held a dark, slim little lad by the hand. Beneath her bright shawl her baby lay asleep upon her breast. The little boy's finely-cut, ivory-colored face, wild black hair and eyes, stirred a flash of uneasy memory, like that of an old but forgotten dream. But why didn't Serge come? How could he leave her to stand there facing that strange crowd alone?

Yet she dared not go back after him. Only once had she intruded upon the secrets of his morning toilet. That was in the Grand Hotel in Rome while they were still in the first weeks of their honeymoon. She had brought him in a telegram as an excuse, giving only a quick unanswered knock as warning, and she had found a very odd-looking Serge sitting in his dressing gown by the window, drinking tea and reading an Italian newspaper. He wore a black skull cap, fitted skin tight to set the long dampened waves of his hair. A gauze and wire appliance attached to rubber bands which passed behind the ears fixed in place the ends of his small mustache, but distorted in the process the lines of his flexible womanish mouth. And frightened by the grotesquerie of his appearance and the

black, baleful reproach in his eyes she had fled without uttering a syllable.

Now the uniformed station-master for the second time came up, cap in hand, all smiles, bowing from the waist. Daisy could not understand a word of his welcoming, but she smiled and faintly nodded her head, keeping her back very rigid the while, an unconscious adaptation of the princely manner. While Jacob, having turned the luggage over to the two waiting *Tscherkeskas*, waddled on anxious, quick, short legs and heaved himself up to the platform of Slavinsky's *wagon-lit*. The whistle shrieked twice and shrieked again in a last prolonged agony of warning.

Then at last, on this little stage, set and keenly waiting, strolled Slavinsky, dressed in gray English tweeds a shade too light,—stiff-shouldered, thin-thighed, a head taller than the average of the crowd. He paused on the platform of the car, glancing neither to the right nor to the left, and lit a cigarette with the implacable self-sufficiency of an Egyptian idol.

As the little crowd surged forward to greet their master Slavinsky buried his left hand in his pocket and thrust forward his right elbow to keep back the touch of dirty fingers. Only the blond young peasant woman, lifting a corner of her bright shawl to show the child at her breast, dragged forward her little boy and succeeded in kissing the back of Slavinsky's unyielding wrist. Sinking to the ground she pressed the hem of Daisy's dress to her lips and then three times fervently embraced her elbow. "Oh," cried Daisy, swaying against Slavinsky and catching her breath. "I thought for a minute that pretty woman was going to bite me. My goodness how queer! Who is she?"

"Oh, she works in the laundry, or the dairy, or maybe

the kitchen at the castle; I forget," he said, and faintly smiled and raised his eyebrows.

Daisy caught at the word "castle." She was going to live in a castle, a great house surrounded by a great park; a great stable, filled with hunters, race horses, brood mares; a famous stallion, and miles of woods and fields and ponds; hundreds of peasants, like serfs; three villages full, all their own. Seventy-five people worked in the castle below stairs, Slavinsky had told her.

Peasants, Jews, officials, men, women and children were bowing and scraping the ground with their caps, all about her. The older peasants laid the palm of their right hands flat upon the ground in making their obeisance. Some of the older women knelt and touched their foreheads to the ground. But the repeated bows of the younger men and girls expressed somehow a different shading. And clustering ever closer together the Jews hovered in their corner.

"Goodness! Those Jews!" cried Daisy, parrot-like, and she linked her arm through Slavinsky's as they turned aside and passed into the first class waiting room.

"That reminds me. I heard you telling some people I introduced you to in Vienna that you had very little money of your own, that you aren't one of the really rich Americans. That is a very silly thing to say, my little filly."

"Why, it's true."

"What nonsense! However, I don't want these same Jews here to catch at any such story. It's not good for my credit."

"Your credit?"

They were standing by the window of the waiting room watching the last of their trunks trundled off by the *Tscherkeskas*.

"Your credit! I don't understand," she repeated with a certain insistence.

"Sometimes, you see, my little filly, one has to get money very quickly; a gambling debt; some tiresome mortgage coming due; a loss at the races. The only way one can get money quickly in this country is to get it from the Jews."

Daisy suddenly felt a little faint. Slavinsky's carefree reference to usurer, mortgages and racing, struck hard and cold against her inherited Scotch prejudice. And to turn her qualms aside she asked if it were not possible to get breakfast here at the station, for they had, she knew, a long day's drive before them and four or five hours before the first stop to change horses. Slavinsky answered, yawning indifferently, that because it was a garrison town the Proskurow station's restaurant was generally not too bad. "I can't eat like this—so early; but I might just drink a glass of tea. But why do you always drink thick horrible yellow coffee in the morning?" he inquired, as they sat down at an untidy table about which the flies were already buzzing.

"Because I don't drink a whole lot of champagne and brandy at night," she burst out suddenly, looking nervous. "You drink tea, don't you? But I don't really know what you drink in the morning, I know so very little about you really!"

Slavinsky paid no attention to this little outburst. He fell silently to inspecting his nails and then began to polish them slowly on the fine-skinned palm of his hand. He rarely wore gloves except when traveling, but kept his hands exquisitely and was very fastidious about what he touched, avoiding contact whenever possible even with the arms of his chair.

Before Slavinsky had half finished sipping his tea,

Daisy, battling against a tide of formless emotion, swallowed her coffee served with lukewarm thick boiled cream which she found in truth disgusting. Slavinsky shook forth a silver ruble from a leather money pouch upon the table. Although Daisy kept her eyes stubbornly cast down, she felt his critical gaze and, conscious of the drooping lace of her frilly blouse—for her maid with French frugality had not packed enough fresh linen for the long journey—she hurriedly buttoned the tight jacket of her traveling costume.

"You look horrid," he said as he rose, using the first disagreeable adjective that came to his mind out of his polyglot's simple vocabulary, and as he sauntered away to the carriage he added in that remote staccato voice of his, "But I do not mind, of course. I do not mind at all." He glanced at the plump Polish wife of the manager of the restaurant, seated behind the long counter, as he passed her by, and raised his brows significantly. She had been sitting motionless as they breakfasted, her delicate sensual hands crossed like Mona Lisa's, and like Mona Lisa she had reptilian eyes and a still, and ever-vanishing smile. Slavinsky disliked the woman for dousing herself with a cheap and nauseous Russian perfume. But for years now he had occasionally passed an hour or so in her stuffy bedroom, coming and going in winter when the trains were late and he traveled alone.

Daisy bowed her head and sat on, staring at an overnight grease spot on the tablecloth. She felt rather sick and bewildered. The wife of the restaurant manager rose from her stool and waddled on tiny feet invisible beneath her long brown woolen dress, through the doorway at the back of the counter which led into her bedroom. Vaguely Daisy must have noticed her going, for she came suddenly back to herself, took out the little hand mirror from her

bag and forced herself to turn towards the window. She was astonished to find that she was not really at her worst after all. Serge could not really have meant it. He had been only annoyed with her for her impudent speech, and because it was so early, and he was not used to being routed out at this time. Glancing towards the door she furtively dusted herself with powder (for Slavinsky had often told her he hated cosmetics) and freshened her lips with a touch of nail salve.

"Of course I'm too thin right now. I must drink lots of milk," she thought. And in truth since her marriage she looked decidedly older. The soft, unwritten baby look of her face had gone. It was as if a fine chisel had freed from uncertainty the molding of her brow and nose and chin.

Daisy closed up her little bag and sat on, pretending to glance through a French novel. Since the wife of the manager had waddled away, plump under her loose brown woolen dress, the two white-jacketed Tartar waiters had disappeared also, and the room was empty and silent, save for the buzzing of the flies.

"I will sit right here till he comes back. I will sit if it takes all day," thought Daisy, biting her lips. And having so decided, she sprang to her feet, picked up her bag and book, and hurried towards the door as if pulled by a magnet, in search of that other part of her very self, which yet was in no sense her own. As she passed through the waiting room Slavinsky walked through the side door behind her. He thrust his leather *portemonnaie* into his trouser pocket as he came. He had just given the wife of the restaurant keeper a ten ruble note, "to buy a wedding present for me," he had said, and he had permitted her as she fell into sly tears to press her small lips to the palm of his hand.

Waiting at the entrance to the wide dusty square at the back of the station stood a sturdy, wide-wheeled britchka, after the general pattern of a victoria, and harnessed to four horses. This was an English fashion recently adopted by Slavinsky, to replace the old *troika*—that is, three horses driven abreast—and a more serviceable arrangement through the mud of the spring thaws and autumn rains. Ivan the coachman, wearing a crown of gala peacock feathers stuck in his cap, a huge leather belt clasping tightly together the thick circular folds of his coat, sat bowing formally on the box, his eyes fixed on his four gray trotters. Stubbornly balking at the English method of driving four, he still buckled his reins across the palms of both hands and drove with arms stiffly extended. He had more than once tasted the effect of one of Slavinsky's sudden rages and usually sat with one shoulder raised up as if ready to ward off a blow. Behind the *britchka* waited another but shabbier conveyance for the servants, harnessed to the usual *troika*, and behind that still another baggage wagon with four peasant horses abreast.

An enormous country. Stretching, yearning, enticing the vision on and on to an ever more indefinite horizon. An enormous country under an enormous fair sky. In the west, clouds hung, ponderously billowing. But unlike the steppes about St. Petersburg which Daisy remembered as dead prairie, lost, desolate, unfit for human eyes to dwell upon, this Ukraine was rich with forest and green fields and bright with ponds and running water. A meadow-lark rose singing in dizzy spirals of flight and Daisy's heart lightened, as if suddenly relieved of an intolerable burden. For this was to be her own country. These were her servants, her carriages, her horses, too. She was driving to her own home with her own hus-

band, and, smiling, she slipped her hand through Slavinsky's arm.

At noon they stopped at a Jewish inn in a little town aside from the main road. A relay from Slavinsky's stables was awaiting them there, and while the horses were changed they ate lunch from their own basket in a private parlor. "You would be poisoned if you ate here. Bugs don't bite me, nor fleas. But you will get immune in time," he said.

Toward dusk they drove through three villages clustered close together. "Our villages," Slavinsky explained, and Daisy's heart swelled with a sense of possession and a fresh new longing toward what was his and hers and theirs together.

Miserable mud and thatched huts leaned forlornly, as if utterly cowed, one against the other. Between them ran a rutted and mud-holed street where the carriage plunged and righted itself again like an over-weighted collier in the trough of a heavy sea, and even the lead horses, slowed to a walk, sweated and strained at their traces. Razor-backed mangy dogs prowled, scavanging through the filthy street. Ragged and barefoot children with matted hair and bright animal eyes gaped, open-mouthed, and stopped their play. Women with babies at their breasts stared expressionless, withered before their time. A few old men sat at the threshold of their windowless hovels. The village was pre-empted of movement and life for at that time of the year all the able-bodied men and women were away from home working in the fields.

A small Russian church with golden cross and dome and walls of white and blue and red stuck like a toy high upon the hillside. The whole great countryside was bathed in a strange milky opalescent light which seemed to sift in beneath the curtains of the horizon from the Orient.

A mile or so beyond the last village, grouped about a flower-entwined white stucco gate, stood a score of peasants, men and women in gala dress; barefooted, bright-skirted girls with flowers and ribbons braided in their hair; half-naked children; young bucks in top boots and sleeveless, sheepskin jackets; a shaggy-headed old man leaning on a staff.

"This is the beginning of my estate," observed Slavinsky. "The peasants have come out to greet us and to offer bread and salt." And he touched his hat with his forefinger, for it was a semi-religious ceremony and Slavinsky was always punctilious about such things. The peasants shouted in deep-voiced unison, and the horses drew up sharp on their haunches. The oldest man of the village approached and presented a loaf of black bread tied up in ribbon, upon a wooden platter; while the second oldest followed him with a dish of coarse brownish-gray salt. A fat merry-faced peasant girl about fourteen years of age, wearing a wreath of poppies and red ribbon upon her brown hair from which depended a coarse white veil, and a handsome gawky youth advanced hand in hand to the *britchka*. Together they knelt and bowed forward until their foreheads touched the ground.

"Oh, gracious!" cried Daisy. "What are they doing? Is it a penitence?"

"No, a very old custom. They come from a good village, these people. They ask permission of me to get married."

"But do they have to ask your permission?"

"Maybe. But perhaps they just want a present." And seemingly pleased, he shook some silver pieces out into the young man's hand, while the young girl ran around and embraced the sleeve of Daisy's traveling coat.

"This is our private park," said Slavinsky when they

had passed the gate. "Now we come soon to our castle. Here are the stables," and he indicated a long brick building with a wide-open doorway filled with shaggy little stable boys.

"It's not at its best just now," he observed. "Some of the horses are off in the paddocks for the summer and some are away racing. I will take you to see the hunters maybe, in the morning."

Daisy felt Slavinsky's critical glance upon her face and, stung to the quick again, she sat up very straight and expanded her chest, tucked up a few disordered locks beneath her hat and tried to bring her tired face to the semblance of a radiant smile.

Coming around a corner, screened by an avenue of beautiful poplar trees and clumps of enormous blooming lilac, the castle revealed itself, a wide bare white building, gaunt and dignified. A temporary box-like wooden vestibule not yet removed since the winter concealed a large sheet-iron door. Uncurtained, unshuttered windows. The general impression of a building left unfinished, but long since begun.

"Castle?" Daisy wondered, opening her eyes and mouth, for she had imagined moats and battlement, maybe a drawbridge and turrets pointing against the sky.

"My father never finished this place. He had several other big estates and didn't come here very often. But you and I, little filly, we will work here together. It will be for you much more amusing." And Daisy caught at the sentimental suggestion of a mutual home-building and, slipping her hand into his, she looked at him with brimming eyes.

Half a dozen men servants, three or four barefooted house boys, stood bowing outside the wooden vestibule. At their head and a step in advance, a very old butler,

warted, bald and fat, wearing white cotton gloves, fingertips shrunk to empty points, and an ancient grease-spotted full dress coat. Standing to one side as if gathered within himself, a thin man, between thirty-five and forty, wearing smartly-cut but shabby English riding clothes. He had a narrow dark head, coarse lips and a beautiful clean Anglo-Saxon line of the jaws and chin. Confusedly Daisy noticed him and with some vague sense of relief and comfort she gathered the impression that here was a man of her own race and blood. Embarrassed by the servants swarming to embrace her arm and the hem of her dress, she turned naturally to him and held out her hand. He seemed to hesitate, took a step forward and then shook hands with her, English fashion. "Welcome to Stasna," he said, and the untainted, English accent, and low deep voice struck poignantly familiar in this alien land.

"This is Mr. Marston," Slavinsky explained, shaking hands in his turn. "He manages the estate and also my hunting and racing stables." Then he indicated to Daisy that she should pass first through the wooden vestibule door.

She stood on the threshold of the square room, half hall, half library, checked by an unwelcoming spirit which seemed to emanate from the double row of crude portraits, male Slavinskys, hung along the white-plastered walls. Stiff-necked, hard-eyed, they stared at her. Some had shaven polls and drooping Mongolian mustaches. Some were dressed in armor; some in fur-bordered kaftans, some in white wigs, silk and laces.

On either side of a big plaster fireplace stood two large leather chairs cracked through to the canvas beneath. Oil lamps still unlit stood upon massive mahogany tables.

A huge uncompromising Danzig wardrobe filled the center wall space at the far end of the room. Two clumsy

but respectable Louis Phillippe consoles and a suite of early Victorian horsehair-covered side chairs completed the bald furnishing.

In odd contrast a pile of silk embroidered and frilly laced cushions lay one upon the other at the head of a rusty-looking leather couch.

And Daisy knew with her first shrinking glance that some woman had gathered these cushions together and, for her own comfort, arranged them there.

"Come," said Slavinsky, taking her by the arm. "I will show you your quarters and we will have a glass of tea. Pretty soon dinner will be ready." Inwardly resisting, fascinated, frightened, Daisy hung back against his arm. They passed together through yet another curtainless, half-empty chamber to Slavinsky's own bedroom.

"Upstairs is your suite," he said. "There is a connecting stairway between," and he passed through the highly polished mahogany double doors. "You see, an old soldier's room. Quite plain, but quite comfortable." Daisy stood facing a new-looking double brass bed, draped with a rich Bokhara gold-shot tapestry. Immediately to the left, near the window, stood a wide table covered to the last inch with framed photographs of women dressed in every variety of costume. Court dress, street dress, mourning dress, ball dress, fancy dress, silken tights and ballet dress, riding habit, undress. Bold signatures flourished across the shiny cardboards from side to side, or initials, or dates, or monograms upon the various frames. Elevated in their midst stood the plaster cast of a woman's foot and about the ankle hung loose a tiny golden chain. A plump coquettish foot, a wise frivolous little foot, baby soft and satin smooth, it breathed a living presence into the room.

They passed into Slavinsky's dressing room beyond,

and came directly upon a second table upon which stood several bottles of English hair lotion and French tooth wash; a silver shoe horn and a woman's long twisted-handled button hook. Daisy's glance riveted itself upon a single large framed photograph of a young woman with soft dark curly hair and an oval face, a tulle scarf about her thin shoulders. Clasped in her long lace-sleeved arms she held a little girl in a frilly dress. Beneath, the signature in clear unformed English writing: "Phyllis and Baby Phyllis, 1902." Daisy felt her heart turn over, lie still and thump again. The English Phyllis and Slavinsky's child—her child—their child. . . . Dim ghosts, conjured in vain by Oliver Redmond, those last nightmare weeks in Paris, leapt out at her, alive like flame. Smiling, these two gazed straight at Daisy, the newcomer, the stranger. Secure within the secrets of the past, the English Phyllis sat and smiled, in full possession, clasping Slavinsky's child in her long Anglo-Saxon arms.

Daisy had imagined that all women of easy virtue bore the unmistakable stamp for any eye to see. Coarse-featured, heavy-eyed, they must be, bosom-flaunting. But this Phyllis was slender, wistful even, simply dressed. Even her hands, which clasped the little girl, looked honest, rather bony; just the hands of any sport-loving English girl.

"Who is she?" asked Daisy, faintly, challenging.

"Oh, just a girl," Slavinsky answered, and grasping Daisy's arm he pushed her ahead through a second door opening upon a little dark rough-hewn stairway which connected these rooms directly with the suite overhead.

"I will show you your quarters, and when you have tidied up a bit come down and we will have tea. Our servants won't get here till later."

Agonizingly aware, like a frightened creature of the

wilds, she hung back in the doorway and captured the room at a glance. A very wide bed with a shabby white cotton counterpane sagged in the middle. A plain wooden washstand. A copper hot water pitcher steaming. In front of the window a simple dressing table hung with freshly washed but torn white dotted muslin. The room teemed with the English Phyllis. Her living presence seemed to swamp the air and press against the walls and ceiling.

"There's a nice view across the park," said Slavinsky, moving behind the dressing table and glancing out the window. But Daisy still hung motionless upon the threshold. Slavinsky dropped his arm around her shoulders as he passed her by on his way downstairs. He had sensed something of what was passing in her mind, for he had a deep-rooted respect for certain elementary conventions and he rather approved his eighteen-year-old bride for her shy and silent emotion.

Sickly fascinated, Daisy upstairs stepped gingerly across the floor to the dressing table and pulled open the drawer. It was clean and bare save for one black wire hairpin which she touched with the tip of her finger as if it were a noxious live thing. Then she moved to the writing table. A blotter lay upon it marked with the trace of Phyllis's big unformed handwriting, and a rusty pen and the stub of a pencil. Daisy carried the blotter back to the dressing table and held it up before the mirror and the words leapt back at her: "Write soon, Phyllis."

Prompted by some self-protective instinct to cover up, hide, show nothing of her shock and shame, she walked blindly across to the washstand to prepare herself, as best she could, for tea. But "that woman's washstand!" Her basin! Her soap dish! Her soap! Evidently she had used this very piece, for it was worn to half its original size. Daisy wiped her face on a coarse lace-edged towel.

Her towel! She must have wiped her hands upon it many times. Those honest, rather bony, sportswoman's hands. Not the kind of hand you would think an out and out bad woman would have. No rings. No bracelets. And dropping the towel she glanced again at the bed. That wide, expectant bed. There they had slept together. This Phyllis and her husband. Or maybe in his room downstairs, night after night, for years. She took out one of her side combs and, standing by the washstand, gazing out the window, ran it through her tumbled hair. She had not the courage to glance into the mirror. For the image of that woman's face, secure and lovely, lay forever stamped there.

Slavinsky was seated in one of the big leather chairs by the fireplace in the hall when Daisy came down, pouring out a second glass of vodka. He was reading an old copy of the Times. Half of the front page had been stricken out with a wash of sticky black ink, by the Russian censors, for the war clouds of Russia and Japan were already gathering thick in the East. He had changed his brown leather shoes for pumps and he had slipped into a wine-colored velvet jacket. His strange beauty sometimes affected Daisy painfully, and now it caused her a real and sudden anguish she could not herself explain. He seemed to her more remote than the first day she met him. Inscrutable, and she herself a stranger in an alien world.

"Will you have a glass of vodka?" Slavinsky inquired without looking up.

"You know I don't drink anything."

"Yes, but have some. It's tiresome always to drink quite alone."

She drank with him!—the suspicion flashed through, and shaking with nervousness she poured herself out a glass of white brandy and resolutely gulped it down. She

strayed across the room, and sat down at the end of the leather sofa. And she stared at the frilly cushions as if they were live things, her eyes turned small and hard with hate. "*Her* cushions," she thought, and suddenly, before she knew what she was about, she had burst into hysterical weeping. Slavinsky put down his paper and looked across at her, tolerant, amused even, for was she not quite the suitable, conventional little bride? Home-sick. Frightened. Exhausted by the revelations of the last weeks. Even Phyllis had cried every day for a month, the first year he brought her out from England.

"I'll never, never, sleep in that Englishwoman's room," Daisy burst out wildly, when she could speak at all. "Never as long as I live. I will never put my foot inside it again. How could you do this to me! How could you bring me here! Right where she lived all these years and never change one thing!"

"But don't, if you prefer not," he answered, raising his eyebrows. "There are quite a lot of other rooms in the house."

"I want to go home to Oliver. I won't stay in this house. I won't stay here. I wish I'd never seen you."

"Now you are making silly American scenes, of course, I suppose you have a headache. When women get tired they get insupportable. I don't know why. But I tell you what we should best do. I will take you to-morrow to my aunt's the old Princess Catherina's. She lives not too far away, and as I have to go to Kief soon on business it is best you stay there. She is very wise, my aunt, and maybe she will give you good advices. While we are away I will have my carpenters and masons arrange new quarters for you on my mother's side of the house." He indicated the wing to the left which she had not yet seen. "You had better drink a glass of vodka and eat a little

cake, *ma chère*," he concluded, taking up his paper without glancing again at Daisy's distracted, childish face. And he thought to himself that he would have to teach her better manners. The right method with women—was always just to leave them alone for awhile, until they came to their senses. He would take her to the Princess Catherina's, and leave her for a week or two. And he had business in Kief as a matter of fact. It occurred to him again that the sooner Daisy became enceinte the better. A baby a year and a nice quiet life in the country would calm those rather unstable nerves of hers. Mutual problems, especially financial problems, would solve themselves as soon as Daisy began to have children. Redmond, who was of course of the highly sentimental American husband type, could then quite easily be prevailed upon.

Before leaving her to dress for dinner Slavinsky laid down his paper, still in a pleasant mood, and described to Daisy two or three of his horses which he thought she would like to ride. "There's a chestnut gelding just come from Ireland and an old seal-brown mare you might like. The chestnut I have not seen myself as yet, but I ordered him especially for you," he said. "The mare is Irish bred and she knows all there is to know about hunting. She stands seventeen hands high. Her feet are the size of quite large soup tureens. But she's always got a leg to spare over the ditches and banks, and she goes very well under a side saddle." Slavinsky prided himself upon his English sporting vocabulary.

"Side saddle?" Daisy tried to steady her voice. "I haven't any side saddle. I haven't got one."

"No, but I have; I have quite a new one from Champion and Wilton just about your size."

Her saddle, thought Daisy, and her heart began to pound again. But she controlled herself this time and sat

staring into the fireplace, crumbling a poppy-seed cake between her fingers.

"I have some business to attend to before dinner," Slavinsky remarked, stretching himself magnificently. "My farm overseer and Marston are waiting to see me in my office."

"Marston, who is Marston?" inquired Daisy.

"Marston was the Adamowski manager until the old Prince died. He was born a gentleman, it appears, but he did some silly things in England, racing, and rather prefers not to go back."

"He looks very interesting. I don't think I ever saw a more interesting looking man," said Daisy, suddenly inspired to try her hand at a new game. "He has the most wonderful black-green eyes. They flash such a wonderful light out of that dark face of his. And he has such a nice, hard, horsey look to him. I suppose he's out-of-doors all the year round?"

Slavinsky blew out a long spiral of smoke. "I'm sorry to say," he remarked, "that I must ask you after all for that check your father gave you when we were married. I am obliged to pay off some beastly mortgages to-morrow. I made a mistake about the date. Marston was just telling me. I ought to have three or four times the amount of your check, which is not very large, by the way, at the end of the week."

"Mortgages?" asked Daisy faintly, looking nervous again.

"But don't be silly. You always knew I had mortgages. Your father talked of nothing else but mortgages for weeks before we were married. Mortgages, women and illegitimate children. I never was so bored in all my life."

He paused and began to smoke again. Then presently

he rose and sat down on the arm of Daisy's chair, and looked down rather grimly at the top of her bowed head.

"Of course, if you rather prefer not to lend me the money for two days—maybe three, I can always borrow from the Jews. But it is such a bore to go to the Jews."

Still her Scotch-Irish prejudices stuck fast at the words: Mortgages; money-lending; debts; Jews. And she shook her head ever so faintly.

"I have drawn up some notes for your signature," he said and putting down his cigarette he drew her head back against his breast. Oh, the magical touch, the anguished relief of his caress. And feeling the very depth of her inmost self dispossessed, swamped, and taken, she sank in his arms and surrendered. Tears ran down her cheeks and fell upon her hand, and he pulled his handkerchief from his pocket—how well she knew the scent of it—and held it to her eyes.

"Yes, cry," he said. "It will do you good. Cry a little and I will just get those papers and come back directly."

After dinner, before going to bed, Daisy signed a long, red-sealed document with a fountain pen which Slavinsky handed to her, and pushed it across the table without glancing up. Nor did she glance at the paper itself excepting to see that it was half written and half printed in Russian. But an indefinite sense of shame weighed upon her heart and mind, while in the background trooped the sordid ghosts of her stepfather's conjuring.

Jacob brought a lamp and conducted Daisy to a room upstairs over the dining room on the opposite side of the house from Slavinsky's rooms. A great square, half-furnished room: very old wall paper; ivy leaves on a soft dirty-white background. Immense Empire bed. A musty lumpy mattress. Sheets and blankets which were too short and too narrow to tuck in. Four mahogany side chairs.

A large mahogany center table, upon which Jacob placed the porcelain shaded oil lamp. A perfectly bare hardwood floor, polished mirror-like each day by barefooted house boys. Daisy liked the room. It was at least her very own, she felt.

Her bags had already been unpacked. The French maid stood silent by the door, staring round-eyed, one hand clasped against her sunken cheek. Daisy hurried to dismiss her, for Slavinsky had said as she left him downstairs without glancing up from his papers: "Perhaps I will come to see you later in your nice new room."

She lay in the dark on the huge, lumpy bed, scrupulously on the right side. Slavinsky preferred the left, and did not like to find it already rumpled. The sheets were so much too short and too narrow for the bed that she could feel the bare mattress with her toes. But would he come? He had said "perhaps" like that, the night they were married, as they sat finishing their coffee after a late supper in their sitting room at the Hotel des Reservoirs, Versailles.

"Now, go to bed, little filly, perhaps I will see you later," he had said, and her heart turned sick again as she remembered the tittering and muffled voices in the hall outside their room that night—her wedding night. For he had taken her as he preferred to take the young peasant girls on his estate in the Ukraine, silently, without a word or one caress; like a panther rutting in the dark, and she had cried out in her fright and pain.

Her long hair streamed backward across the pillow over the edge of the bed nearly to the floor. "It is not good for long hair to sleep with it loose. It breaks the ends," her mother had always told her. But Serge seemed to like her hair. He had said so, often. He liked to plunge his hand through the length of it and admired the effect

of the soft, bright strands slipping along the hard, fine contour of his arm.

Bare of screens or curtains the wide French windows stood open almost flush with the floor. She could feel and smell the black-green velvety night. Scent of lilac. Feel of black damp soil, and fresh, cool northern green. A nightingale burst into song.

Daisy thrilled to the core of her being. It was true, then, that there were nightingales in this north country. He had often told her so, but she had never quite believed him. And she lay perfectly still, suspending her breath, suspending her life; aching for the sound of those unhurried footsteps, the dragging slap of Slavinsky's slippers coming down the long, bare corridor.

Since her marriage Daisy had penetrated no further beneath the surface, into the Oriental soul of the man, nor along the convolutions of his Slavic mind. In truth, she understood the real Slavinsky no better now than the night of the old Princess Catherina's ball, when he had taken a little gold key from his waistcoat pocket and laid it down beside her plate. Like his own Russian language, there seemed to be no first familiar word or syllable, no stepping-stone to understand. They had become neither true lovers, nor true friends; for with Oriental caution he kept from his young wife the secrets of his passions; selfish in love as in all things he had skilled his body only for its own delight.

Yet it was only their physical union which gave her any—however brief—sense of reality. When he lay relaxed in her arms sometimes she believed that she at last possessed him. He belonged to her then, she felt, and to her alone, those few short minutes before he turned from her to fall asleep—into that sudden sleep of his, profound, grave, infinitely remote.

"Are you asleep, Serge?" she whispered, and dropped her head against his shoulder. He nodded.

"Yes, I am asleep."

"But, Serge, do you know what I was just thinking? I was just thinking that I would so much rather be your mistress than your wife."

"But you are my little mistress," he answered and, clasping his hand behind his head, he closed his eyes and sighed twice, very deep and slow.

"Because if I were your mistress, and you brought me here to live with you, I would know you really loved me," she persisted.

"My little filly, I am afraid you have been badly educated—American system. But you can't help that. You must begin to grow up, though, or you might get quite boring later on."

But Daisy only pressed closer to his side. "Serge, I have had such an awful day. Tell me you love me. Say you love me," she cried.

"Of course I love you, little filly; you know I do; only you pinch me with your elbow."

But Daisy would not heed the warning. She hung upon his breast and gazed down into his half-closed eyes. "Serge, tell me, I must know. When did that English woman first come here? Oh, Serge, every one knows all about it but me. And that little girl in the picture. . . . Is that the little girl Oliver told me about? Was she born here? Oh, Serge, is it true you have had lots of women here?"

"Now, my little filly, I am afraid you are really getting quite tiresome. So I had better tell you once and for all," he concluded, turning away from her and settling his head definitely upon the pillow: "I have been loved the whole of my life and the sooner you make up your mind to it

the better for all concerned. To-morrow we go to my aunt's, the Princess Catherina's."

The old Princess Catherina Molotzina's Ukrainian country house, to which she usually migrated from St. Petersburg for the short summer months, was situated about forty-five versts south of the Slavinsky estate. Plastered white, reminiscent of good solid Georgian architecture, it was built around three sides of an open cobblestone courtyard. Segregated behind a background of trees stood a dozen or more white-plastered, thatch-roofed mud houses where the coachmen, stable boys, laundry girls, house boys, cooks, carpenters, bricklayers, painters and gardeners, descendants of the original serfs, still lived, attached to the old princess's service, deep-rooted to the place as the great oak trees which shaded the lawns.

The house servants slept in the cellars, in a big room on double-decked wooden berths. Excepting for the old Princess's two personal maids and the maids of visiting women friends, there were no female servants in the house. All the housework, even the making of the beds, was attended to by house men and young boys.

When Slavinsky and Daisy arrived at the Princess Catherina's the next day they found an unexpected group about the tea-table in the drawing-room. The old lady herself sat on a red velvet and ebony sofa, at her ease in a white lace bed-jacket over a loose black satin skirt. To one side of her Marietta Lichtenwald, in correct K  ntnerstrasse country costume of pale blue English homespun. A cap of the same material perched high upon her frizzy, blond pompadour. Opposite sat Nathalie Kavelin, sipping her glass of tea, in a delicious white chiffon house-dress. Her Chinese hair was drawn straight up from her low forehead. From her little ears hung two

enormous pearls. Her cousin, Dimitri Kavelin, lounged beside her. He wore the white drill jacket of an officer's summer undress uniform, and he was engaged in sipping from a huge stein of German beer. The old Princess kissed Daisy upon both cheeks and sketched with her thumb the sign of the cross upon her forehead. "*Soyez la bien-venue*," she rumbled and then aside in Russian to the others: "This child is a stranger, remember. Be kind to her. She is a very long way from home."

Nathalie's brown eyes were luminous and tender as a fawn's when she turned to Daisy and kissed her, an arm about her waist. "You are very, very welcome," she said. "I hope you will be happy here." Even the stiff-shouldered Marietta approached Daisy with embarrassed cordiality. Her transparent skin blushed vivid rose as she touched Daisy's cheek with hers. Like most inhibited people Marietta was sensual and cruel. And like most cruel and sensual people she was extremely sentimental, and marriages, ceremonies, christenings and funerals, love songs and faded souvenirs touched her easily to tears. Dimitri smiled boyishly and kissed both of Daisy's hands, obviously delighted to see her again. Owing to the depleted state of his finances, he had been obliged to come to spend a three months' rather questionable sick leave with his aunt on her estate.

"Varia, where is Varia?" asked the old Princess, seating herself again upon the ebony sofa, "and Casimir, where is he? They went out together over an hour ago."

"Oh, is the Duchess here?" asked Slavinsky, dropping a bit of lemon into his tea. He liked to drink tea occasionally for he thought it an excellent prophylactic after heavy drinking.

As if in answer Varia came through the open French windows at the back of the long room. "Is it true Sla-

Slavinsky has arrived? But where is he? I must see him. I want to see him," she twittered like a bird swaying on a branch, about to sing. "Ah, Slavinsky, but there you are. How delightful! I didn't see you at first. The room is so dark. And the bride, where is the bride? I must see the bride. This room is so dark after all that brilliant sunshine. Princess Catherina, why do you keep your rooms so dark!" She kissed Daisy with another little cry of welcome, and trailing her light dress, one long arm and hand stretched upon her parasol, she turned her head and fell into one of the most graceful of her many attitudes.

A tall and slender young man, wearing a pince-nez, had followed Varia through the open windows, after a moment's interval. The old Princess presented him to Daisy.

"This is Count Casimir Languszkó. He has a Polish name but he has some good Russian blood in his veins notwithstanding. He's a charming young man," she added, her hand on Casimir's arm, speaking rather to him than to Daisy. "But that Polish blood of his——" she broke off from French into guttural English—"well, he is not to be trusted, especially with young brides, my dear. I shall put him as far as possible from you at table," and she wagged her old head up and down, wise and kind, with a dash of malice.

Next morning Slavinsky drove off, on his business trip to Kief, waving his cap to the group on the terrace as he stepped into the britchka. Daisy thought that his glance lingered on Varia's face rather than on her own, yet one couldn't be sure. They were all grouped so close together. In the afternoon Marietta and Varia, Nathalie, Dimitri Kavelin, and Casimir Languszkó and two or three young men of the neighborhood rode out through the park for a gallop across the fields. Daisy was not a

little dismayed to see how well the three women rode and managed their horses. Even Marietta had a bold, sure seat, and confident bearing. "Oh, do stay with me," she whispered to Dimitri Kavelin as he arranged the straps of her side-saddle skirt. "I don't ride very well." Purposely he delayed their starting and kept beside her, knee to knee, riding slowly and once or twice he leaned forward to check her horse (an honest hard-mouthed roan) whenever the animal, resentful at being left so far behind, started to gather too much momentum.

Although a very heavy man, trained from childhood in the classical cavalry schools, Kavelin was an excellent horseman. Inspired by the charm of his pupil, he gave her the benefit of his enthusiastic attention.

The lilacs were in full bloom. Here and there huddled close beside willow-fringed ponds, little villages peeped out, misted behind rose and white orchard blossoms. Side by side with their women, shaggy-headed peasants worked on the Princess's enormous black-soiled fields. Their own fields stuck out like little checkerboards on the stony hillsides.

"Never pull on your reins steadily," said Dimitri, his knee against hers, at a sharp turn in the narrow path. "Give and take like this, see, give and take. No, let's just keep to a walk for a while." They were passing under the long avenue of birch trees, foaming with green, dappling shade and sunshine.

"You will make a real horsewoman one day. You are made for it." Dimitri let his eyes wander over the lines of her supple yielding figure in its black cloth skirt and tight white drill jacket.

They returned to the house before the others, and when Dimitri helped her down from her horse he held

her in his arms, she thought, a trifle more securely than necessary.

Late in the evening around the samovar, before going to bed, the conversation drifted into subjects strange indeed to Daisy's experience. Varia Bramtemberg, Nathalie, Dimitri, and Casimir Languszkó, had all gone together one afternoon in Paris during the previous winter, to an exhibition of the great modern masters. Although somewhat complicated by her fashionable habit of mind, Varia had a genuine flair for music and painting. In a little flurry of words, like a paper snowstorm, she burst into praise of the Monets they had seen. But Nathalie reserved her judgment.

"I don't know about those red haystacks," she hesitated, and glanced at Casimir for guidance. "But I have learned to adore Manet. I didn't use to."

"Oh, yes—his simplifications," murmured Casimir.

"Those eyes he paints. They speak to you. They haunt you, like Goya's things. And his still lifes are terribly exciting; troubling to the nerves. It seems to me that all modern art is especially intended to exasperate the nerves." And feeling that she had contributed her share for the evening she began to nibble at a little cake, which was sticky with honey, and gritty with poppy seeds.

"Monet has a divine facility," murmured Casimir, taking off his glasses and pressing one slender hand against his eyes. "Evaporating. . . . Sifting light. . . . And his horizons . . . as if breathed upon the canvas." Occasionally Casimir contributed short articles for the Polish Artistic Review. And within his own circle his opinions were accepted as ultimate authority.

Kavelin, sleepy after his heavy dinner, had long since retired to bed. Slavinsky and the old Princess were sitting together on a large upholstered sofa at the far end

of the room out of earshot of the rest of the company. The old lady was anxious to inquire if Daisy had already passed into an interesting and delicate condition of health, while Slavinsky always affected great disinterest in any artistic or literary discussion. "I have never read a novel," he liked to boast, "why should I? My own life is all the novels of the world rolled into one."

Suddenly Marietta, who had been staring out the window, her cheek in her hand, seemed to come back to life again. The name which, although on the tip of her tongue, had so far refused to pronounce itself and had prevented her from taking part in the conversation, leaped into her mind. "Cézanne!" she cried. "Cézanne—Ah, what power! Mass. . . . What sense of form! You know he never paints his fruit from real life. He buys glass apples and pears and grapes and paints from them." And she opened and shut her prominent blue eyes in the manner she considered most fascinating.

"But Countess Marietta, permit me, why do you think that a recommendation, to paint fruit from glass and marble models?" enquired Casimir, putting on his glasses again. But before she could answer, Nathalie set down her glass of tea, in its silver holder and broke in with her bright laugh, "Oh, probably because, whenever he could afford to buy real fruit, he ate it up before he had a chance to paint it," she said. "What do you think, Casimir?"

Casimir had picked up a pear from the china fruit plate and began to peel it, holding it delicately, so that the juice would not drip upon his fingers. "Evidently this pear is of the Cézanne variety," he said and laying it aside he chose another more to his liking.

"Languszkó, you have never given me your honest opinion of my portrait by Boldini," Varia broke in. "Of course I like it better than my Laszlo, you know that.

Although Laszlo may be the coming fashionable painter, as you say, Boldini paints with such a dash and elegance!"

"My stepfather had a friend who was painted by Whistler—you know, the queer man who dyes his hair all but one lock—" Daisy began, so self-consciously that her voice sounded odd, high-pitched, even in her own ears. Casimir suspended the peeling of his pear, giving her his undivided attention. "She sat to him dozens and dozens of times," Daisy went on. "He made her come back over and over and over again. But she never got her picture. One day, she never knew why, he destroyed it." She finished uncertainly, as if she were not sure herself whether she had not missed out the point of her story.

"He, of course, was a very odd man," Casimir agreed. Although he was still delicately skinning his fruit, pushing the bits of *débris* to one side with the point of his knife, he began to study Daisy for the first time. He thought her perfectly charming, sitting there in a thin saffron-colored dress. He studied her feet and hands, the line of her shoulders, her small pointed breasts.

"I was just finishing Anatole France's *Thaïs*, this afternoon," said Marietta, seeking to hold Casimir's attention. "No one writes with such purity of style—exquisite. Cold. Like frost upon the windowpane. And have you noticed——"

But Nathalie interrupted her again quite rudely this time, "We all know what you are going to say. We have all used these same adjectives ourselves. And we have all borrowed them from Casimir."

Holding a golden knife and fork in each hand, Casimir smiled and shrugged his shoulders. He had fancied himself very much in love with Nathalie a few years back, and, still very fond of her, he was always very lenient with her sometimes uncomfortably frank speech and

manner. When he had quite finished his pear, and while Marietta, Varia and Nathalie were discussing Dostoevsky's character of the Fool, which runs through all his books, said Nathalie, in one form or another, Casimir drew his chair a little closer to Daisy's.

"And have you read *Thaïs*?" he asked, taking off his glasses again.

Daisy felt that she had secured a new ally. She bit her lip and shook her head brightly, and shielded herself behind the charm of her youth and inexperience. "You see, I haven't any education. I don't know anything at all," she said.

"Then may I bring it to you to-morrow morning in the garden, at eleven? By the sundial?" he ended. He put on his glasses again and gave her a rather long look, and when the ladies rose together to say good night he kissed Daisy's hand with a decided shade of emphasis.

"But, dear Princess" (the title still struck fantastically on Daisy's ear), "promise me one thing. Don't read *Thaïs* for its story alone. Read it first for style and composition."

"Very well, I promise," Daisy agreed softly. "It will be quite a new experience, though."

Nathalie Kavelin slipped her arm through Daisy's as they stood in a group around the tea-table saying good night, and they walked away together quite naturally up the white-walled stairway and along the wide white-plastered corridor to Daisy's room.

"May I come in?" Nathalie asked, pausing on the threshold and looking at Daisy affectionately with her brimming, dark eyes. "Let's have a little talk. It isn't so very late yet." She sat down on a low chair beside the open French window and gazed out into the fresh darkness of the starlit night, while Daisy, not a little embarrassed, draped herself along the edge of her bed in an

attitude she rightly imagined to be both nonchalant and graceful.

Nathalie was thinking of Slavinsky, of how passionately she had loved him, of her despair when she broke with him and how odd it was that the whole episode had so little reality for her now. She thought, too, of the astonishment this little bride would suffer if she were to tell her that she, Nathalie, had been Slavinsky's mistress only a few short months ago. Glancing across at the graceful figure on the wide bed, she wondered if Slavinsky slept here or in the dressing room beyond. She remembered his trick of falling into a profound sleep almost in the midst of a sentence. And she remembered how remote and lost to her he was then, and how he hurt her feelings.

Actuated somewhat by curiosity, somewhat by a masochistic urge to turn the knife and re-animate the past, and inspired by a genuine impulse of kindness, Nathalie began to speak without any definite idea of what she was going to say. But she wanted to gain Daisy's confidence, become her friend, and to reveal to her as much of her real self as under the circumstances she dared.

"You know," she began gently, still staring out the window, wishing to avoid the embarrassment of a mutual glance, "Daisy, I believe we shall be friends. You know, I always liked you from the very first time I saw you. You remember that night at Princess Catherina's ball?—Your first ball—you were just a little girl then. Just think of all that's happened. . . ."

"Oh, yes," half whispered Daisy. She flushed and bending her head began to pick at an embroidered tulip on the counterpane.

"I wonder if you don't find life a little difficult just now," Nathalie continued, leaning back in her chair,

still staring out the window. "You see, you have been brought up so very differently. It must all seem very strange to you." She broke off and, tilting her head, seemed to be giving her attention to the mournful howling of the gatekeeper's dog at the entrance of the park.

"You are very attractive to men," Nathalie resumed, without any apparent connection, after quite a little pause. "Or perhaps you don't know that yet." She looked squarely at Daisy for the first time since they had come into the room together, and fell to wondering whether Slavinsky found his young wife attractive as a woman. As attractive as he had once found her.

Daisy, tingling with shyness and delight, bent her head and tried to control the twitching of a nervous smile.

"Perhaps you will think me what you call in English 'cheeky,' but I am so much older than you and, my dear, I have had so much and such varied experience." She pressed the back of her fingers to her dark eyes which, like a fawn's, always looked as if they were close to tears. "Since your husband went away, I thought I noticed that Casimir Languszeko and my cousin Dimitri have been paying you just a little *brin de cour*. But it is of course only quite natural."

Daisy glanced up, protesting, then dropped her eyes again. How fascinating Nathalie looked, in her pale trailing dress. The big pearls in her neat little ears glowed softly against the jetty black of her Chinese hair.

"It is nothing really, of course. Do I sound like an old pedagogue? But you see, my dear, I have been through it all. I see myself in you the whole time. That is perhaps why I have always been so much interested in you. You see I am quite frank. I want to be very honest so we can be friends. My husband was, and he is—a very hard man. He"—she hesitated—"he looks quite like Sla-

insky. You will see him one day. I remember, when we were first married, I was seventeen. I stooped down to kiss him and he pushed me away. 'You are too ugly,' he said." She shrugged her shoulders and looked down at her tightly clasped hands. "I think that broke my heart," she went on, "for I was really in love with him, or I thought I was, which amounts to the same thing. Probably he was right. You see, that was before I learned how to dress. I was a passionate, ignorant girl, a little like you, my dear, I think, if you don't mind my saying so. Although you are better looking than I, you still have something—excuse me—to learn about clothes. One of my cousins—oh, not Dimitri—you don't know this one—began to make love to me. That was years ago. I was terribly flattered. That was the whole thing. My poor hungry vanity, which my husband hurt nearly every day of my life, was finally satisfied. And of course, too, my cousin did have a great deal of physical charm. But we weren't together very long before my husband found it out. He is an old fox, my husband. Each time he found me out he punished me. Once he sent me to Lithuania on one of his estates there, for nearly a year. In the beginning sometimes he beat me. You see, he never cared for women much himself. He never cared for me, certainly. But it just hurt his vanity. Not always, though. One of the younger English dukes came to Russia two years ago. You know what a fuss people make about the British aristocracy."

"Oh, don't I," Daisy murmured, smiling, and astonished that so great a lady as Nathalie should have stumbled upon her mother's ancient fetiche.

"Well, my husband didn't seem to mind him so much," Nathalie went on, smiling to herself. "But I see myself in you. You adore your husband. Just as I adored my hus-

band. Slavinsky may, or he may not, fail you. One never knows. But he is perhaps—rather a hard man too, like my husband. And you are, I believe, quite shy still, seeking self-assurance just as I was, at your age. If he does fail you, you may naturally seek for love elsewhere, because, at your age, with your temperament, what else besides love—I want to be quite, quite honest—what else besides love would interest you at all?”

Daisy, half-dizzy, bent her head and went on picking at the colored threads from the counterpane.

“Nothing, unless you have children,” Nathalie answered herself. “I have a little boy twelve years old, you know, and a baby girl. Sometimes I used to be so ashamed before my son. It is on account of him that I have given my whole love-life up—finally—forever.”

Nathalie extinguished her cigarette and paused, with an uncomfortable feeling of hypocrisy. Her honesty was her greatest pride and she sincerely regretted now that she could not tell Daisy the whole truth. “My dear, believe me,” she fixed her brimming eyes full on Daisy, “if you are in trouble—if ever you need a real friend—remember—me.” She rose and walked to the window, and then changed her voice to a lighter tone.

“Of course some women take their love affairs like their meals. But I don’t think you are like that,” she went on. “Marietta is, though. But then these Austrians are generally quite sensual. Varia is different. I can’t imagine her in—love . . . at all. Can you?” She threw back her sleek head and laughed like a child. “Can’t you imagine her twisting that long neck of hers and dropping things and chattering the whole time? Really now, if you were a man, wouldn’t she make you nervous?”

Daisy was sitting up straight by now, cheeks burning? scarlet.

"Why," she half-whispered, "Marietta and Varia—have they——?" She felt like some novice, suddenly thrust within the long-coveted, the glamorous inner circle, and as if it were all too delightful to be really true. But Nathalie, believing she had gone too far, grasped Daisy's reluctant hand and pulled her up from the bed.

"I have gossiped enough—far too much," she cried, and as they parted at the door for the night she laid her arm affectionately around Daisy's shoulders. "Nothing I have said will influence you very much, though, I am afraid," she said. "Yet like an old circus horse, I feel I must go round and round and round the same old ring. I was given good advice, too, by the hour, but I never listened. But try to remember, darling, your one solution will be in your children. Have lots of them. And take a real interest in your own place. And learn to ride. Ride all the time. Hunt with us this autumn, if you are not having a baby. You know we are all coming *en bande* to your place for two weeks in October. It will be too much fun. Your new pack arrives from England in a few days, Slavinsky was telling me. You must ride hard. It's a wonderful antidote."

Dazzled by Nathalie's intimate confidence, Daisy undressed slowly, her thoughts turning like bright paper windmills. She rolled over to Slavinsky's side of the great Empire bed and buried her nose in his pillow, seeking the scent of his particular hair lotion, which smelled of spice and white carnations. It was the first night since their marriage that she spent entirely alone. For hours she yearned with fixed and hopeless anguish, like a dog who has lost its master, and she fell asleep at last with her cheek against the sleeve of one of his old dressing-gowns which she held clasped in her arms.

PART FIVE

DAISY set her heart upon following Nathalie's advice to hunt that autumn with the new pack of hounds which Slavinsky had just brought out from England. To prepare herself, she rode every morning, and sometimes twice a day, across country and over a series of jumps fixed for the schooling of the young horses in the park. The seal-brown Irish mare Nora, originally the property of Miss Phyllis Burke, was turned over to Daisy for her especial use. She stood seventeen hands high. She had a long and bony, but noble head; grand shoulders and a splendid chest. If her front tendons were no longer what they once had been, her quarters still looked as if she might negotiate the moon. Daisy and the mare took to each other from the start. A current of warm, intimate understanding flowed between them. When Slavinsky was away Daisy conversed with Nora more than with any other living creature on the place, and Nora listened, cocking back one or the other of her large and sensitive ears.

The first day Daisy rode she asked Marston if the mare was used to a side saddle. When he told her that Nora had never carried a woman before, she believed him, for Marston always spoke with such an odd restrained intensity that even his least significant remarks seemed utterly sincere. Years afterward Daisy could remember almost everything he had ever said to her.

Although Slavinsky sometimes led the way, Daisy rode, for the most part, alone. But Marston sometimes watched her over the jumps and occasionally accompanied her

across the fields, if she happened to be riding one of the young horses. She never forgot the day he told her she had a natural seat, which was, he said, the main thing. "If you like horses and understand them, you will have good hands. If you don't, you won't," he told her.

Daisy woke at dawn on her first hunting day, aroused by the baying of the new pack of hounds which Slavinsky had recently brought out from England. At intervals during the night she had heard the swish of rain and wind tearing at the brittle autumn leaves outside her windows. Now, already feverishly excited, she ran across her draughty room to peer through the open window at the weather. She feared there might be no hunting at all that morning, and she prayed in her heart of hearts that this might be the case and that the fascinating yet arduous ordeal might be postponed for yet another day.

But seeing that the heavy rain had lightened to a drizzle which, in the half-light, shrouded the trees, fences and the distant stable, she ran back to the warmth of her big lumpy bed and lay there, knees drawn up, tensely waiting for her maid's knock on the door. For she had hours to live through before the hunt breakfast when the whole house party and some outside guests from the neighborhood were to assemble in the big hall downstairs.

With the exception of Varia Bramtemberg, who sent word that she had a headache and would not ride that day, everybody turned up promptly on time. There was a feeling of robust gayety in the air, although two or three of the young provincials looked uneasy in their brand-new pink coats tailored in Warsaw or Odessa.

Marietta Lichtenwald wore a tight whaleboned Vien-

nese habit and a tricorn hat held fast by a cruel elastic beneath her tight blond braids. Nathalie, turned out by Busvine in one of his new safety skirts, seemed quite content to show her left leg to the waist, from behind. Her waistcoat was canary-colored and she had put on her best cutaway coat and a shining top hat. Pale with excitement Daisy, a little too feminine as to silhouette, her coat a trifle too pinched at the waist, wore a velvet-collared black habit from Paris.

Unlike most Poles, Casimir Languszek had very little personal vanity (excepting that he did dislike to wear his glasses) or possibly he posed as having none. He had always known that he was "joli garçon." It was a fact so universally recognized that it was useless to dwell upon it. Although he had been in Berlin a few weeks before, he had not troubled to order himself a pink coat and leathers, "because I expect to fall off at the first fence, anyhow," he had replied, amused with himself, in answer to Nathalie's interrogations.

Dimitri Kavelin, in spite of the slight alcoholic mottling of his young face, and the huge bulk of his body, made a gallant showing in his brilliant cavalry uniform. But Slavinsky, as usual, outshone all others. His brand-new master's coat straight from Bond Street fitted his splendid figure like the paper on the wall. A faint smile lightened, although it did not soften, the expression of his black eyes. For that day he was to attain one of his life-long ambitions—to hunt from his own castle, master of his own hounds.

Half a dozen or more of the young men of the neighborhood turned up for breakfast. Several of them, with an uneasy, pasty look to their faces, appeared in the dining room only after the others were seated. Daisy noticed before they sat down that Marston was absent.

She had rather expected him. Once before he had come to their table on Slavinsky's birthday, along with the superintendent and his wife and the village priest and a score or so of the *petite noblesse* from the neighborhood. However, she forgot his absence when a silver casserole of roast chicken was presented to her, surrounded with kasha and mushroom sauce, for she had so little appetite that the aroma of the food repelled her. But she drank two or three glasses of port wine and managed to finish a large slice of bread and butter because, she thought, "with all this hard exercise before me, I must really take something nourishing." Her nerves were on edge with a half-sickening, half-delicious apprehension. She was astonished to see the unruffled Nathalie, in a jolly mood, tucking away a good solid meal unconcerned, as if she were starting for a little walk about the garden. She observed, too, that Marietta helped herself twice to the kasha and covered her plate with the rich mushroom sauce. "One gets so cold out hunting," she said, to excuse her greediness.

Daisy was the first to mount her horse. Seemingly shyer than usual because of the large company, Marston pulled up a hole of the balance strap of her side-saddle, and without looking at her, "I'm sorry I can't give you a lead to-day. The huntsman broke his collar-bone yesterday, and I've got to take his place, you see," he said. His mouth, curiously coarse, as if left unfinished in the otherwise finely modeled face, drew to one side. "Remember to give the mare all the head she wants at the jumps and save her when you can. I've given you a double snaffle and running martingale to-day." He looked worried, and hesitated as if loath to leave her. "She might be a little hard to hold at the start," he said finally. And slinging himself into his saddle, he was off at a gallop to join the whining,

yelping pack which had already moved some distance away.

The hounds were thrown in at the end of a big beet-field which skirted the forest. Nora switched her tail and moved off as if electric wires had suddenly galvanized her long and massive legs. With a little qualm in the very pit of her stomach, Daisy appreciated the metamorphosis. Because of a child-like and passionate desire to keep ahead of the small field at all costs, as if she were engaged in a steeplechase, Daisy set her jaw and grimly maneuvered for place, now following Marston, now dropping just behind Slavinsky, occasionally coming near to stepping upon one of the cringing hounds. When she saw that Slavinsky had stopped to light a cigarette for Nathalie she let her mare break into a jog-trot and pressed forward again until she had come abreast of the pack. Without looking up Marston turned in his saddle, showed his dark profile, and curtly bade her keep her distance. "You'll be mixing up with the hounds next," he said. But just then an old white-headed bitch stretched her neck and, raising her head, let out a long ecstatic whimper.

And from then on the mare, Nora, took full charge of the proceedings. Daisy clutched at her reins and, hand over hand, pulled them up short as Marston's cry "Gone away" rang across the enormous countryside. But Nora reared her great bulk upon her hind legs, plunged, twisting forward, and snatching her head free, lunged across the field while Daisy, horrified, saw that she had dropped one snaffle rein. But Nora, her fascinated gaze upon the running hounds, with the passion of a miser gloating over fast disappearing gold, unconcerned with the perturbations of her passenger, propelled herself across the plowed field with all the power of her great steel-muscled quarters. They came to a ditch and bank, yawning as if with

the jaws of death. Daisy could see the hounds pour down over the brim, disappear, stream up again and over. She saw Marston's horse, all four legs high in the air; close behind, Slavinsky, seated a trifle too far back. Nathalie, to one side of her, flashed by on a young thoroughbred chestnut; Marietta thudded along somewhere close behind, but out of her sight. Almost abreast of her, side by side, rode Casimir and Dimitri, laughing and calling out to each other. Right upon the long yawning ditch they came. Daisy clamped her knees to the pommel and remembered just in time to give Nora full rein. They landed. Daisy's head jerked so far back that she felt as if it were attached to the end of a long elastic band. But she managed to settle herself in the saddle again before they picked up speed and started once more at full gallop. The lovely hounds slipped into place. So smoothly they ran, so fast, they seemed stuck like toys upon some painted sliding scene. Turning sharp to the left, they plunged into the dark of the forest like porpoises plunging down through the waves of the sea.

Marston disappeared through the trees. Daisy caught a glimpse of his scarlet coat. Then the whips, then Slavinsky and Nathalie, Kavelin and Casimir Languszeko.

The forest tore by. Flung out hard, crooked limbs which miraculously did not sweep her from the saddle; she wondered why. Single file, they streamed along the winding trail. At each turn Nora changed the lead of her large and nimble feet. Daisy sat there, breathing short. Sometimes she raised an elbow to ward off the branches. But mostly she sat, a bewildered passenger, clamped to her saddle. There must be room somehow for her, if Marston and the whips, Slavinsky and Nathalie could still stream through.

The mare Nora galloped at her own sweet will, one

rein still flopping, for Daisy did not dare to shift her seat and lean forward to pick it up again. It was lasting a long while, this wild ride through the dark and awesome forest, filled with living, thrusting, jabbing things. It was like ringing doorbells in the old days in Chicago; like climbing church steeples, and walking down Clark Street in the dark. It was like all the forbidden excitements of her childhood, intensified a thousand times, and it seemed to be going on and on forever.

At last the forest began to thin out as if some heavy mist were rising. Daisy noticed single trees. Then she saw that the hounds had disappeared. Horses and riders had vanished and she realized that she was quite alone. They came out in an immense, desolate, plowed field, half-circled by a sharp rise of bare ground. The mare dropped to a trot. Then into a long nervous running walk, and while Daisy leaned forward to pick up the still flopping snaffle rein, she realized with relief that the animal had definitely slackened her gait, that she was blowing hard, and her neck was black with sweat.

Then a miracle happened. In the fringe of the forest a stag, carrying his high crown thrown back upon his shoulders, slipped through the shadow of the trees, silent, wistful, tenuous as a ghost. Then, fragile, finicky-stepping, he melted away. Daisy's heart thumped wildly. The stag! She had forgotten all about it. The stag! Why, this is what they had been hunting all day. The stag! She had seen it. A miracle! With a courage born of this new excitement and fostered by her mount's somewhat depleted condition, she dug her heel into Nora's side and sawed at her mouth to pull her around. She, Daisy, would ride her own line. She would follow no one. Slavinsky had often told her that was the only proper way. She would ride after the stag alone.

The mare had stiffened at sight of the stag. Ears pricked, rigid. But now she caught Marston's repeated halloo approaching from behind the long low hill, and first the hounds poured over the brim, looking no bigger than ants, and then three scarlet coats showed up, tiny in the huge sullen landscape. Nora turned her old head to the right in the opposite direction from the forest and began to sidle off, breaking into a gallop, in imminent danger of crossing her legs, across the field. For she was not interested in stags.—Hounds, the pack, they were the unique passion of her life.

Although set out of balance by Daisy's frantic sawing on her left rein, the mare made stubbornly after the pack, while Daisy clamped herself down in her saddle, put her back to it, and fought for control. But Nora buckled her neck, snatched at the reins and went her way. They came to a wide ragged ditch, Daisy still pulling at the reins, and the mare, out of her stride, took off too late. On the rise Daisy saw a green boggy patch on the far side. The mare saw it, too, and high in the air seemed to make a supreme effort to propel herself across. They landed. Nora's forefeet plunged in, stuck fast. The great body lurched over in a complete somersault and lay still. Daisy came to between the four inert hairy legs. The big belly with its queer-looking girths seemed enormous, grotesque, within a few inches of her eyes. She pulled herself up and began stupidly to wipe the slime and mud from her eyes and mouth. A sickening, gurgling sound, a choking grunting groan. Daisy watched the luminous eyes glaze over, saw the massive, clean-hewn legs shudder and lie still. A ragged cut on the right forefoot, where the mare had over-reached herself in falling, dripped red with blood. Distracted, Daisy unwound the long white stock from her throat and bound it clumsily around Nora's great coronet as it stuck

ut free, one leg crossed upon the other. And, as if to propitiate the gods, she used her diamond barpin—a wedding gift from Mrs. Schultz—to fasten the ends together.

Then she sat back in the mud and gazed with horrified realization at the swelling bulk beside her. Now that the strain of the long day had ended with the shock of her fall, the reaction set in. She saw the hunt plunge again into the forest and disappear out of sight. And she sat there, incapable of moving, as if drowning with despair, in the mud, motionless. Once she thought she heard again Marston's cry to the pack, thin, distant, hollow, but she made no effort to rise to her feet, or even glance behind her. In the failing light the enormous landscape, without one living thing that she could see, stretched infinitely like some desolate sea. A long hour passed before, stiffening with cold, she came to herself sufficiently to struggle up to the nearest rise of ground and look about for a peasant cottage or some familiar landmark. And standing there, she saw Jim Marston riding toward her out of the forest, leading a riderless side-saddled horse, the stirrup stuck upon the pommel. He came cantering across the big field and, even when he had dismounted, he barely glanced at the body of the dead mare. "Broken back," was all he said. "I'll send one of the boys for your saddle when we get home," and he explained that he had borrowed Countess Kavelin's horse. The Countess, with Countess Sichtenwald, had already started home in a friend's witzska picked up along the road.

Apathetically Daisy let Marston take her mud-caked foot in his hand and, pausing there before springing to the saddle, with tears in her eyes, "I'm so awfully ashamed," she said. Marston snapped the elastic around her boot in silence, but he gave her a quick, shy glance as

she gathered her reins together and prepared to start. "You had best button your collar across for we shall have to walk the horses the better part of the way home. It has turned quite cold," he said.

Daisy settled herself miserably in Marietta's saddle, which seemed too short and wide for her. It was well after dark before they approached the lights of Stasna. "I hope to see you to-night," said Daisy, breaking a long silence, with a shade of uneasy questioning in her voice. But Marston answered her nothing at all. She could not understand whether or not he had been invited to the little dance which was to celebrate their first day's hunting, but without further questioning she thanked him for picking her up and guiding her home.

"It was awfully nice of you. Every one else seems to have forgotten me," she said. Because of his lean hard figure and well-cut riding clothes, and because of that guise of romance which has always clung to the true horseman, especially if he be of the reckless, hard-living variety, she began at that moment to give him a place in her thoughts which he had never held before. But she kept her tone very detached as she turned away. And she said good night without looking directly at him. For, with amazing American adaptability, she had already acquired something of that sweet obliviousness of manner that distinguished Varia and Nathalie and Marietta when addressing their social inferiors.

Daisy paused, rather dramatically, on the threshold of the big hall where a company of perhaps twenty-five people had gathered for tea. About half of them she had never seen before. Her hair, from which she had surreptitiously removed the last pin on her ride home, fell in a tangled mass along her back. She was splashed with mud and she held her smashed bowler hat in her hand. Marietta

and Nathalie had already bathed and dressed for dinner and had slipped into lace and chiffon tea gowns; Varia, clad in a black velvet house dress, lay, her long body completely relaxed, stretched before the fire. Five or six provincial-looking ladies, including three young girls whom Daisy did not know, sat self-consciously sipping their tea. They held their cups in small, plump hands, and crooked their little fingers. They smiled a good deal and made great use of their real lace handkerchiefs. Several families of the lesser nobility had driven all day long across the country to attend, with their marriageable daughters, the little dance that night.

At sight of Daisy, Nathalie put down her teacup and hurried across the room to greet her by the door. Slavinsky in a claret-colored velvet smoking jacket, a faint flush on his ivory skin from the vigorous day in the open, holding his glass of whiskey and soda, sauntered across behind her. "You had a fall? You are not hurt?" cried Nathalie.

"And my poor old Nora—she is done for?" Slavinsky inquired, raising his eyebrows and laughing in his silent way. When he heard that the horse was dead he did not relax his high good humor, for Daisy's accident appeared to him as the rather smart accompaniment of an excellent sporting day.

Casimir gracefully bent and made a pretense of kissing Daisy's mud-stained fingers. When she tried to pull them away, he turned them over and kissed the palm of her hand instead. Dimitri Kavelin, who, like the visiting neighbors, had not yet troubled to change, sauntered up and stared in Daisy's face. It excited him to see her standing there, bare-throated, her matted hair hanging almost to her knees. The ladies from the neighborhood were in their turn presented to Daisy. Still of the eigh-

teenth century, they bowed and smiled with an infinity of small gestures and unanswerable politeness.

Daisy crossed the room as soon as she could disengage herself, to a table laden with whiskey, vodka and sandwiches. "I think I will have a glass of this vodka," she said, her voice almost extinct with nervous fatigue, and she held out her glass to Casimir. "I am so tired," she added, raising her eyes to his. "How shall I ever be able to dance to-night?"

Casimir had a golden timbre to his voice, gold flecks in his eyes, gold in his blond hair and in the blond of his skin. Even at that moment Daisy felt his Polish charm. It seemed both more elusive and more insinuating than any quality of the kind she had ever experienced before. She stood there and drank her vodka, one hand on her hip, one muddy foot resting upon a low footstool, in the attitude which she considered best suited for so sporting an occasion.

The post boy came in, carrying a worn leather pouch, still clammy with horse-sweat, in his hands. Slavinsky opened the bag with a key attached to the ring he always carried in his pocket and presently sent, by one of the footmen, a letter to Daisy from Oliver Redmond, dated London, one from Mrs. Schultz dated Chicago, and a card from Oscar Schultz, her son, now a young doctor studying in Vienna.

"My stepfather is sailing for a six months' shooting trip in Africa," said Daisy, smiling and looking up sideways at Casimir. "Can you imagine such a thing? He is such a nice man. I hate to have him so far away. And here is a letter from a dear old friend." She tapped Mrs. Schultz's bulky epistle without opening it, and dropped it in her pocket. Then, scanning the postcard, "Here is a line from her son. He is studying medicine in Vienna.

"You are so funny about doctors here. Is it true they don't even dare send you a bill? You just pay them what you like; and they address you in the third person?" Without answering, for he had not listened to what she said, Casimir continued to try to catch and hold her eyes.

Yet, while she stood there, nibbling her sandwich, coquetting with Casimir, every nerve in her body was strained to intolerable tension by Slavinsky's attitude as he sat on the arm of Marietta's chair, bending over her, showing her—what? Of all things, his cuff links! His mother's old sapphire cuff links! Marietta lay back in her chair as languidly as her long corsets permitted, her translucent skin brilliant from the open air, her thin nostrils flaming as if painted. And Daisy saw how she gazed up at Slavinsky with her fatuous Hapsburg eyes. Yes, he was showing her his cuff links—those cuff links he had once told her, in his detached staccato way, he cared more for than anything else in the world. His mother had given them to him on his twenty-first birthday, he had said. They were sacred to him if anything was and she, Daisy, would have scarcely dared to touch them. Now he was showing them to Marietta, telling her the whole story. Slavinsky never liked to speak of his mother. He never did when he could avoid it. Nathalie, she remembered, once told her in the early summer, when they were at the old Princess's, that people said that the only real love of his life had been his mother. She was very beautiful and very unhappy, and she had adored him. "I don't believe he has ever cared with his heart for any other woman. I mean, of course, until he met you," Nathalie had added hastily, but with a flat tone to her voice which struck upon Daisy's ear. Now he was showing his mother's cuff links to Marietta, his face concentrated, very dark and still.

Daisy finished a second glass of vodka, choking a little and raising a protesting hand to Casimir's offer of his handkerchief. She could no longer listen to what he had to say; she could not keep her eyes away from the sight of Slavinsky bending forward upon the arm of Marietta's chair.

As a signal that dinner would shortly be announced, two mustachioed footmen in top boots and loose baggy trousers came in, one carrying a copper vessel of live charcoals, upon which the other poured an aromatic vinegar which hissed and sizzled, turning into perfumed vapor.

After dinner that night, the whole company of about fifty people assembled in what Slavinsky was pleased to call his ballroom, an enormous barrack-like apartment on the second floor, running almost the entire length of the house. The wide frescoes were handsomely designed in a Louis Sixteenth gray and white stucco motif. The floors were marquetry, polished like mirrors, but the great fireplaces at either end gaped bare of their mantels. Two magnificent crystal chandeliers hung from the ceiling, radiant with the soft light of hundreds of candles. At the four corners of the room, along the sides, stood several high oil lanterns. The place contained no furniture, save for a desultory chair, and there were no hangings. In one end huddled a band of half a dozen stringed instruments, led by a pop-eyed and wistful little Jew who stood waiting, his elbow raised, to break into music as Slavinsky came into the room.

"*Lorsque . . . toute est fini,*" the waltz wailed voluptuously, and Daisy turned and held out her arms to Casimir. Although her yielding figure had been criticized the year before in St. Petersburg and her will-less way of dancing, Daisy had never before consciously abandoned herself.

Slavinsky had not spoken ten words to her since she came home, nor had he given her so much as one look of interest, much less of sympathetic understanding. She had arrived purposely late to dinner, coming in when the others were half through, having sent word that she could not possibly be on time. Although Slavinsky was often late himself, it infuriated him to be kept waiting. But to-night he seemed scarcely aware of her tardy arrival. She had drunk champagne quite recklessly. At first indifferently sipping, then as if some bitter spirit drove her with an obscure yearning for revenge, she drank half glasses at a time, although the bubbles caught in her throat and she hated the taste, grown acrid on her tongue.

The music's insistent plaint turned, with the wine, in her giddy head. But although she felt herself will-less, turning, turning, like a creature possessed, she could not bring herself to answer the light insistent pressure of her partner's hand.

When the music stopped, Casimir dismissed her with a little formal bow. Embarrassed, she could not meet his eyes, and sought for some impersonal diversion. "You see that little Jew violinist, the leader," she said. "You know, he goes quite crazy for months at a time, some one was telling me at dinner; he goes quite off his head." And in truth the little Jew looked as if he was playing on his own heart-strings in a sort of frenzy, his big eyes starting bug-like from their sockets.

"Yes," Casimir smoothed back his hair with slender, nervous fingers. "I heard about it, too. It is the terrible contrast, probably, of vermin, filth, starvation, ugly women, ten months out of the year. Then he bathes himself, puts on clean clothes, comes to castles—like yours—drinks heaps of champagne, has everything he wants to eat and a nice clean bed to sleep in, and night after night

he plays his soul out until morning for lovely creatures in jewels and silks, sweet with the scent of flowers—like you.”

The music began another waltz song, a Viennese waltz, this time, and Daisy draped the long train of her mauve tulle dress across her arm and, yielding herself to Casimir, danced again. She could feel her own breast against his and she let the rhythm of her dancing lag voluptuously a fraction of a second behind, answering him. Answering. Neither could speak when the music ceased again and yet Casimir had for her only the vivid unreality of some delicious and forbidden day-dream.

Varia Bramtemberg, with the kindly intention of not overwhelming the simple country gentry with her customary gorgeousness, had put on a plainly-draped white satin dress. But she wore her famous blue diamond sautoir. Ever since the music began she had been sitting in a corner of the bare room with the most robust of the young provincials, who looked as though he was about to burst his collar with suppressed emotion. Varia was not in her usual childishly sunny mood for, owing to lack of pressing facilities and the inadequate single oil lamp on her dressing table, she was not as exquisitely turned out as usual. And she knew it. But she smiled dreamily into her partner's eyes, while she held the tassel ends of her sautoir firmly between her gloved fingers. And like a bird perched on a flowered branch in the sunshine, she trilled and fluted. Sometimes she thought of nothing at all. But once when her bull-necked young partner leaned forward suddenly in his chair, she fancied that he was about to seize her necklace and jump with it through the nearest window. And she twisted her throat and gazed wide-eyed along the shining floor, where she fancied she already saw a handful of her treasures rolling.

Slavinsky was dancing with Marietta. He was the only one among the company who wore a scarlet tail coat. Without regard for the music he waltzed his partner slowly down the length of the room. To the intense admiration of the company, augmented by a score of new arrivals since dinner, Marietta disdained to pick up the fragile train of her shell-pink satin dress and, as she turned and turned, she held her head and shoulders high, with frozen elegance.

Nathalie had Casimir for her partner while Daisy went out into the hall for a glass of champagne with Dimitri Kavelin. "I watched you making *la cour* to Daisy," whispered Nathalie to her partner, her brown eyes full of reproach. "I want to be quite frank with you. It is not fair. She is so young. It is not good sport, you know."

"But is it not sure to be some one?"

"In time. But don't you think every man is entitled to his *first-born*?"

"But look at him dancing now in his hunt ball coat. *Quel poseur!*" Casimir protested, and graceful, fluent, he turned Nathalie so that she might have an unimpeded glimpse of Slavinsky.

"I know." Nathalie lowered her voice. "We all know, excepting poor Daisy. She is still madly in love with him. *Folle de lui*. But so have we all been—"

Casimir slipped his delicate hand lower about her waist and, to silence her, fell into a spinning reverse down the length of the room.

Outside in the hall Daisy and Dimitri had found an old horsehair sofa to sit upon. As at old Princess Catharina's ball the year before when Dimitri, oblivious to all others, had expressed his mad devotion to Daisy's mother, so now, regardless of the group about the sagouski table, he whispered hoarsely to Daisy that she was the loveliest

creature he had ever seen in all the world and that he would gladly die for just one word of love from her. The wine and the music turned in her head together. Hungry for admiration and for some definite assurance of the power of her charm, she gazed smiling into his heavy eyes. And only when she had sipped her glass of champagne to the last drop did she rise uncertainly and drift back to the ballroom again.

They danced until the late misty October dawn. The candles, changed many times, gutted finally in their sockets, and through the open shutters the sickish autumn light filtered into the room. Daisy's mauve satin slippers were worn at the edges, the ends of her train torn to shreds. She felt soiled, worn, disenchanted. She danced the last waltz with Casimir, resting in his arms as if she already belonged there. Unsmiling, eyes closed, she moved in senseless abandonment to the music.

"I wish I had met you at your *début* at Princess Catharina's ball," Casimir murmured, "when you were only a little girl—before you were married." And he shifted his arm about her waist suddenly, to make her open her eyes, fearing the criticism of the provincial mothers.

Daisy halted before the music had quite ceased, by one of the windows. "Yes," she replied drawing in a deep breath. "And just think of all that has happened to me since then. This dance to-night—and that. What an enormous difference!"

"But what do you mean, what difference?" He noticed the drawn shadows around her eyes and mouth like those of a sick child, and he thought with Polish perspicacity that he was perhaps the first man to see these first faint prophecies of age. "What difference?" he urged. "Tell me. We have but a minute left."

"Oh, then I thought of nothing but my dress, how many

partners I had, and if my hair would ever stay up until I got home."

"And now," he urged, smiling but insistent.

"Oh, now?"

"What did you think of to-night when you were dancing with me?"

"Oh, I wondered if you weren't falling a little in love with me."

"If that were true would it displease you?"

"Oh, no, why should it?" Embarrassed, she turned her head aside and made a movement to go, while her eyes followed Slavinsky dancing the last waltz with the pink-cheeked Marietta. But Casimir detained her.

"You know, I thought your dress a pervenche color, but now in the daylight I see it is mauve," he said with an irrelevance that was somehow no irrelevance at all.

"Yes, I'm still in half mourning, you see," she answered, flushing faintly, for she felt she was in some way committing sacrilege to her mother's memory.

"And these violets?" he asked, just touching the crushed small velvet flowers at her breast with the tips of his fingers.

"Oh, yes, they are supposed to be violets," and feeling that at last she had made a real and most desirable conquest, she left him, to say good night to her other guests.

The winter set in shortly after the house party disbanded. Slavinsky left frequently on business trips, "pour des affaires," he would say, without going into explanations. But she understood that there were problems of farming and racing schedules, wood-cutting, mortgages, which took him at short notice to Kief, Warsaw and Odessa. Once he prolonged his absence for three weeks and traveled unexpectedly to St. Petersburg. When he re-

turned Daisy asked him about Marietta, and to her own surprise she felt herself flushing crimson. But he made no direct reply. Marietta had the grippe, some one had told him, he said; he did not remember whether he had seen her or not, but Nathalie sent her a lovely photograph of herself in Russian court dress, a seventeenth century *kokoshnick* on her head, heavy with real emeralds and rubies and strings of beautiful pearls which covered her forehead.

Varia Bramtemberg had a new flirt, Slavinsky related, a Georgian prince with enormous eyes as big as hen's eggs and a waist like a little girl's.

Each time Slavinsky left her he took with him even her sense of reality. The whole of her life force poured after him, followed him, leaving her emptied, and blank and drained of herself. For one thing, there was no one around the place with whom she could really talk, for with child-like improvidence she had not yet set about learning the language of the country. And some subtle and newly acquired class instinct forbade her to talk to Marston except on the most impersonal topics: the weather, the hunters, the stud, next year's racing. And although she was always pleased at a distance by the sight of his thin hard figure and bitter face, their conversations were really more embarrassing than agreeable, due as much to Marston's curious inhibitions of speech and manner as to the taboo in her own conscience against even the first sign of familiarity with a man who was in fact her husband's hired agent. Only once, driven by a reckless loneliness and some obscure impulse toward revenge, did she overstep the barrier between them. It happened during Slavinsky's prolonged trip to St. Petersburg. Daisy had lingered with Marston in the stall of one of the brood-mares whose colt had died

from pneumonia. At leaving, Daisy made a few steps toward the stable door, then turning back, suddenly she asked if he would not come up to the house for tea.

"It's very nice of you. But I'm afraid not," was all he said. His voice came from the depth of the stall where he still stood, a lantern over his arm, beside the mare.

About that time she began to speculate upon the peculiar passionate intensity of his gaze, and several times she watched to see if, when his eyes fell upon some one else—a stable boy, one of the servants, or even some inanimate object, it would not lose something of its wild intensity. But she never could quite make up her mind.

When Slavinsky was away, on clear days, Daisy, in her high felt snow-boots, would struggle along the paths opened anew every morning about the house and down to the stable. Sometimes she went sleighing behind her own four new dappled-gray Moscow trotters, rather smaller and finer in type than the ordinary run of their breed, as befitting a team designated especially for a lady. Marston had bought them for her at the Jarmolincy fair; to pay for them she had given Slavinsky the money her stepfather had sent her for her birthday. Wrapped in her furs, her feet and legs enclosed in a fur bag, she would gaze out across the passionless, implacable white landscape. Her knitted woolen veil would freeze stiff about the nostrils while the cold penetrated grimly, surely, to the very marrow of her bones and fastened there. And when finally she had come back to the silent house, she would creep into bed as if she were creeping into her own tomb.

One day she found a group of English novels by Conan Doyle, Stanley Weyman and Anthony Hope, in a hanging shelf behind Slavinsky's dressing-room door. Some trembling, sure instinct prompted her to turn first to the

title leaf, and there in that clear, painstaking, never-to-be-forgotten handwriting, she found the signature leaping up at her as if alive from the pages. Once in a while she would steal up the rough stairway to Phyllis Burke's rooms, still left untouched, just above Slavinsky's. There she would pause on the threshold, fascinated and forlorn, and stare around the deserted chamber which, for her, was filled with imperishable life.

During these days of suspended living, her appetite, always precarious, would utterly fail her. Alone at table, sitting stiffly upright in her chair in forlorn imitation of Nathalie's chic and sprightly carriage, she would refuse one silver-covered dish after another, the very sight of which sufficed to nauseate her. She would nibble a few nuts and drink a glass or two of heavy burgundy, which she found relaxed her nerves and relieved the intolerable strain of waiting for the post bag which might, or might not, bring news of Slavinsky. Stormy days, when the snow had piled too high for the post boy's shaggy cossack pony to break the way through to the village and back, were deaf, blind and dumb days—like days sealed within a tomb.

Sometimes she wondered apathetically if she were not going to have a baby. But save for the nervous dislike of food which had come upon her, she had no cause to believe so. Turned in upon herself, cut away from all former associations and natural diversion, during the winter her passion for Slavinsky had gradually taken on a new morbid intensity. It became the only reality in her strange, intraverted life. It faded to pale shadows every other creature that came within her sight, so that the thought of a child, instead of appealing to the starving love in her heart, only inspired a new jealous apprehension.

Toward spring Slavinsky returned from Odessa with a heavy cold. He was sitting up in Daisy's huge bed, wrapped in a velvet dressing gown and covered with quilts and one of Daisy's fur coats, for in spite of the big wood stove the room was draughty. His face and head, beautifully clear cut, stood like a cameo against a pile of colored satin pillows. And looking at his changeless beauty she despaired of her own physical appeal.

He would sleep in his own room, he had said the night before, still standing in the hallway, the fur of his *shuba* stiff with frost.

"You will catch my cold," he had said. "I have a beastly cold and fever." But for once Daisy had persuaded him.

"I can wait on you all night. You may want a hot drink. Please let me stay with you. I am sure you have a terrible fever. I have an alcohol lamp, you see."

Slavinsky dropped the London Times upon the floor, sticky with its black-washed censored columns, and he looked at Daisy, his black eyes unwinking, inscrutable.

"Why is it you have no babies, my little filly?" he asked suddenly, out of a clear sky.

Intent on her knitting needles, which she had picked up that morning for the first time in months, with the idea that knitting was a proper accompaniment for a nursing wife, Daisy had an excuse for not answering.

"It's not my fault, you know," said Slavinsky.

No, it was not his fault! Daisy felt a painful flush flooding hot across her face as she remembered Phyllis the Englishwoman's baby.

"There must be something the matter with you," he continued. "Pretty soon we had better go to Vienna. Anyway, I have to be there for the first race meet, and I should like to have some of the doctors there look you over."

"I have a young friend there who is a doctor, Oscar Schultz," Daisy replied, with some hidden feeling of answering him back and holding her own. "The Schultzes are the people who have always been so kind to me. You remember, I have often told you about them."

"I think you had better see a doctor with a long beard," Slavinsky, answered and, amused with the idea, he stooped and picked up his paper again.

"I don't see why," Daisy objected, hoping he might be jealous of so young a man.

A little later on he asked her if she had heard from her stepfather while he was away.

"Why, no, he must still be in Africa."

He asked when she expected him back and she told him she didn't know exactly, some time in the summer, his postcard had said.

"But that was weeks and months ago!" he objected.

Daisy felt somehow as if she were being cross-questioned, and answered irritably, "I can't help that. Africa is quite a long way off, you know."

To this Slavinsky made no comment, but after a slight spell of coughing he put out his cigarette and lay back among the pillows.

"You see, my little filly," he said, speaking in a serious tone. "A man marries to get something he has not got. Otherwise, why would he marry? Now, besides the charm of your company, with which of course I am delighted, I want to have some children. And besides children, I want to improve my property, buy more land, pay off more mortgages. When we meet your stepfather again we will perhaps come to a better understanding—a new '*modus vivendi*.'"

"*Modus vivendi*?" Daisy queried, not understanding, beginning to feel apprehensive.

Slavinsky smiled his most charming smile and held out his hand to her. And when she had come, obedient as a dog to his gesture, he drew her down within the curve of his arm until her head rested on the pillow.

"We should have babies and a little more money to be quite happy. Anyway, we will need more money when we have babies. You should write Papa Redmond and get him to come to Vienna as soon as he can. He is so devoted to you." An edge of sarcasm was in his voice. "You do not seem to be very busy just now. You will never be a real knitting-girl, even I can see that. Now, there is some ink on the desk, if it has not dried up—these house-boys are all such silly idiots—and a pen—there should be a pen. I think it would be charming if you wrote Papa Redmond, this morning. You might tell him you are expecting a baby. He will be delighted to get your letter in Africa where he is, of course, completely surrounded by chimpanzees, crocodiles and lions. And it will, of course, be quite true what you say, that you are going to have a baby by the time he gets your letter. Tell him to hurry and come back. That you don't feel very well. As a matter of fact, my little filly, you *have* grown quite thin and pale. Write him a nice long letter while I finish reading the Times."

Slavinsky kissed her and released her with a little shove, and she sat down at the heavy Empire desk and, without the slightest qualm of conscience, wrote in her own language the letter which he had dictated.

Slavinsky and Daisy arrived in Vienna at the Hotel Sachers in early spring. Madame Sacher in person met them at the door, curtsying, bowing her dyed and smartly lifted head, jingling her bracelets and long earrings.

Evidently Slavinsky was an old favorite and the arrival of his bride had created quite a stir.

Three or four crowded days passed before Daisy sent a red-capped *diensmann* to Oscar Schultz's apartment with a note asking him to tea. When he walked into her sitting-room the next afternoon she had an odd feeling of shrinking within herself. She was not prepared for his uncere- monious manner of coming into the room. And his way of shaking hands. She could not quite define it. He was very American, she thought, and let it go at that. She had forgotten the force of his personality, the dark, vigorous head. How it must have hurt his mother to give birth to him! The sensitive mouth, looking rather more sensitive than it actually was, below the broad, full-blown nostrils. He seated himself, and she noticed that his trouser leg, which he neglected to adjust at the knee, exposed not only one of his garters, but a pair of blue cotton socks above common-sense, square-toed shoes. His hands were powerful, broad-thumbed, thick through the palms. She wondered as she looked at them how he could ever make a skillful surgeon.

Oscar stared straight at her and then seemed to remember himself suddenly, and relaxed, one shoulder hunched up higher than the other against his chair. He had been shocked and interested by Daisy's appearance, ten years older than the girl he remembered, and there was a bitter, stormy look to her. The whole outline of her face had changed, chiseled out, bitten in. But her hair, although differently dressed, looked about the same. It still shone extravagantly back from her forehead in long honey-colored waves and its weight made her neck seem too slender, somehow, childish, inadequate to its burden. She had put on a tea gown of gray chiffon which fell straight to her feet from the silver ribbon which bound

her breast. She knew that he would write the people back home how she looked, and she had taken considerable pains with her toilette. They broke the silence together.

"My mother wrote me——" began Oscar.

"It's such a long time——" said Daisy.

He interrupted himself and let her go on, staring at his leisure, now that he saw that she would not meet his glance, staring at this exquisite young lady with deep shadows under her eyes, and her hair piled upon her head like a golden crown. Although they drank coffee and passed little cakes to each other, conversation seemed increasingly difficult. Daisy asked him if he remembered rescuing her from among the three heartbroken wall-flowers, at the Schultz Christmas vacation dance in Chicago. "You'll never know what it meant to me. I wanted to die," she said.

"It's funny," said Oscar. "You'd been in our house so long, and I never paid much attention to you, until that night. You had a yellow dress on, and I remember you told me you had put your hair up for the first time."

"Did you like it?" asked Daisy, thinking of her old day-dreams in which Oscar had once so romantically figured.

"Why, no, it was quite a shock," he said, and although his smile was as spontaneous as a child's and they were speaking of old and intimate things, still Daisy could not feel at ease with him, and she decided after all not to ask him to the little fête that Slavinsky was arranging for the next evening, for some of their Russian friends who would then be passing through town. He would never find a word to say to Marietta Lichtenwald, especially now that she was back in Vienna among the inflexible caste to which she naturally belonged. Nor with Nathalie either, once her first moment of curiosity was satisfied. But

Varia, of course, was different. Once a man struck her fancy she was known to rise with surprising agility on those light butterfly wings of hers, and flutter above any mere social prejudice.

Oscar did not stay very long, and while he drank his coffee Daisy watched the door uneasily, for she hoped that Slavinsky would not come back until after he had gone. When he finally rose from his seat with a heavy forward swing of the shoulders, although she could feel the warmth of a wave of honest affection welling up from her heart, she was at the same time distinctly glad to see him go.

"Well," he said, and he looked as if he were genuinely amused, but as if the joke were on her, rather than on himself. "I guess you can get along without the pleasure of my company for a while. We haven't much to say to each other right now, have we?" and he held out his broad palm to her. "But if ever you should need an old friend——" he broke off, with a grin, for the first time a little shy. "I seem to be delivering myself of the usual speech," he said, and bowing rather awkwardly from the door, he faced about and left her.

Slavinsky told Daisy that there was a race meeting at the Jockey Club which he was going to attend at ten o'clock that night.

"Don't wait for me, little filly," he said, yawning and stretching himself before the mirror of the mantelpiece in their sitting room. "Such a lot of old friends from all over Europe will be there, and after all, a man's club is like a man's home. I must just put a proper coat on and I'm off."

Having instantly felt the artifice of his tone, Daisy followed him into his bedroom.

Something was wrong. She knew it. She sat down tentatively on the edge of his bed and fingered the wide lace flounces on her sleeve, watching him furtively, suspicious, uncertain.

Jacob, the dumb, the moon-faced one, presented the dinner jacket, adjusted the collar, straightened the back, while Daisy watched, speechless, disbelieving. Slavinsky sat down before his triple-sided dressing-table mirror and, like a woman, he scrutinized the beauty of his face. This side. That side. Then he gave an order to Jacob, guttural, monosyllabic. On his short legs Jacob toddled to the bathroom and returned with a small bottle of perfume, while Daisy went on fingering her long lace sleeve. She recognized the little amber *flacon* of *Peau d'Espagne*, his favorite perfume. Slavinsky moistened the palm of his hand. Stroked backward the shining waves of his hair. Wet the tips of two fingers and twisted up the end of his pointed mustache. Now she knew. She knew positively, without formulated words or reason.

Then Slavinsky took his hat and stick and light spring overcoat from Jacob and with a negligent good night muffled by the smoke of his cigarette, passed directly through his bedroom door into the hall. She knew.

Daisy went into her room and picked up a novel. She turned page after page without receiving any but a visual impression. She flung herself dressed upon her bed. But she could not even bring herself to relax the muscles of her bent knees. She lay tense as some animal, poised, ready to spring.

But finally, when the strain became intolerable, she crossed over to a window and opened it wide to the stirring, fresh May night. And for an hour or more she crouched there and watched the streetwalkers pace briskly to the corner of the Ring, turn, and pace briskly back

again along the licensed route. Stalwart, handsome women, these Viennese Verlorener. Modestly dressed, deep-chested, clean-skinned. And Daisy watched them, fascinated. Then she saw a man slink along, catch up, brush by the girl's elbow, pass her a few paces, turn, drop a word and follow discreetly behind. Where were they going, these two? Where were they going to hide themselves, burrowed into some hole together? And Slavinsky? Hidden, too, somewhere. Where had he gone? Lost to her. Like this man and this girl—hidden—burrowed away together with some woman. And here she was tied up, thrust aside, left behind, like a dog. Left alone. If only Nathalie were here. One friend. One anchor. Some human being to talk to. She thought of Oscar. But what could she say to him if he did come? How could she talk to him about these things so very deep in her heart? But maybe he would take her out somewhere, to a cafe, she thought, and about twelve o'clock she scribbled a note and told the *dienstmann* to bring it back in case the gentleman were not at home. But in half an hour the messenger had come back again, pulling her note out from the depths of his greasy red cape. And she told herself that she was glad. After all, she could scarcely have borne the ordeal of talking to Oscar.

She listened to the Stefanskirche clock strike two. And then, without any clear thought of what she was about to do, she ran into her own room, threw off her evening clothes, pulled a gray tweed walking skirt over her head, slipped into a white linen blouse, buttoned all awry, jammed a little black hat down over the mop of her hair and thrust her arms into the sleeves of a gray tweed jacket as she ran down the hall, dangling a silly feather boa from one hand.

She knew that the night porter followed her out on

the street and stared after her, but she was beyond caring for that, and she walked away along the Kaentnerstrasse to the Ring and then along the center path beneath the trees. In and out of the darkness, walking fast, plunging into shadows, splashing through pools of garish light. A full-bosomed, athletic young woman came towards her. Glanced at her from under her big hat, bright-eyed and wise. Did they take her for a newcomer? Did they mind? How handsome they were—these prostitutes! How fresh and young! If only she might speak to one of them. Hear her story. See at first hand and hear for herself the whole truth from one of these strange, enemy creatures who dwelt in a world cut off from her own. A world into which she could never pass. But a world into which her husband stepped at will, as easily and lightly as across the threshold of their own door. "All he has to do is to put on his hat," she thought, smiling with bitter humor.

A man brushed against her shoulder, passed, turned, peered right into her face. But, though she tried, she could not bring herself to meet his eyes. Instead, she pulled the feather boa dangling from her shoulders close about her cheeks and turned her head aside. "*Süssemädel*," he whispered, brushed against her elbow, and whispered again low insistent German words she could not understand.

She kept on walking, tall, slender, undulating, but hiding her face, turning this way and that behind her silly feather boa. The man passed again, peered again under her hat. And she thought of Slavinsky, her husband, with a childish sense of satisfied revenge—Slavinsky somewhere in that great city lost to her, with some other woman in his arms.

But after an hour or so her steps began to lag. Now and then some new man passed and, waiting for the light, peered into her face and, waiting for the dark, brushed

against her side, murmuring words she could not understand.

Exhausted at last, she came slowly to herself. Yet one more turn, and one more, for she must drain thought and sense from her mind and body. And she must stick it out till morning, until she could feel sure he had returned, and would be sitting there, angry, violent, worried, maybe, fearful of his own dignity, she could always count on that.

The sun came up as she trailed her way back to the hotel. Daisy pushed open the door of the sitting room, holding her head high. Every nerve braced, tingling, longing for a scene. But the apartment was empty. She ran across to his bedroom and the emptiness leapt at her. Then she pulled off her hat and half collapsed on the edge of his bed. His bed, neatly turned down, wide, fresh, still expectant. His dressing-gown limp over the back of a chair, sleeves drooping, flat and empty. His leather slippers beneath, impregnated with the print of his feet, like two dogs, dumbly waiting.

The noise of the traffic had died away. Market wagons lumbered along unhurried, from the country. Occasionally the clip-clop, clippety-clippety clop, clop, clop, of a fast, two-horse *fiacre*. Slavinsky would come home in a *fiacre* like that. He would drive behind the same competent, brisk clippety-clop-clop. She strained her ears for the sound of some slackening in the bright gait coming around the corner.

She opened the window and, leaning out, sniffed the sweet, pungent morning air. Soon she could ring for coffee. Although she felt too sick, from so much emotion, to feel hungry, yet she longed for the hot, comforting stimulant. Her eyes fell on the clock on Slavinsky's desk. Nearly six. Broad daylight. Just then the Stefanskirche

broke into chimes. The clock on his desk, then, must be slow.

Daisy was drinking her coffee when Slavinsky came in. Imperturbable, his face very pale, expressionless, he glanced at Daisy's gray tweed dress and rumpled hair.

"Are you going out or are you coming in? Or have you merely gone quite crazy?" he asked, and put his hat and light spring overcoat aside. Daisy set down her coffee cup. Very quietly. Without a clatter.

"You have been out with a woman. You have been with a woman all night," she whispered, in a flat, small voice.

Slavinsky shrugged his shoulders and crossed to his own door, but Daisy flew forward and spread her arms wide to stop him.

"You have a mistress," she cried, sobbing. And like a child her whole face broke up into tears.

Slavinsky thrust out his lower lip, wrinkled up his nose, screwed his eyes together and sniffed absurdly. She looked in horror at his grotesque imitation of her weeping. "I do not happen to have a mistress. I went to see a girl I know. I shall go to see any girl I like, any time I choose to. You have no money. You have no children. You have no sense. You are no good for my wife. You bore me to death. And when Papa Redmond returns," his lips drew back against his teeth, "I'll ask him to do me the favor of taking you back to America with him." And flinging her to one side, he went through the door and turned the key behind him.

Berkes the Elder had come from Budapest to play for Slavinsky's dinner-dance. And walking down beside the long flower-laden table, he made his violin sing words of pleading, intimate words pouring like warm, sweet wine,

wild words of longing, and simple, broken, passionate words, first to one guest and then to another. Slavinsky had organized this dinner in the private dining-room of the Bristol Hotel especially for Varia Bramtemberg and Nathalie Kavelin, who were passing through Vienna on their annual spring visit to Paris. Marietta had been expected, too. And, because a suspicion pierced like a nail through her brain that it was with Marietta Lichtenwald, and not some nebulous "girl" that Slavinsky had passed the preceding night, Daisy had thought all day long of what she would say and how she should look, and whether or not she should greet her at all that evening. But Marietta sent a message by telephone at the last moment that, owing to a severe cold, she would be obliged to forego the pleasure of meeting her friends that evening.

Dimitri Kavelin arrived unexpectedly that morning. He looked surprisingly well and even handsome in civilian clothes, in spite of the square of court plaster which concealed some small unpleasantness upon the back of his neck.

But Casimir Languszeko, who had promised Daisy before leaving Stasna in the autumn, to meet her surely either in Paris or in Vienna in the spring, had not arrived. And Nathalie seemed glad to tell Daisy that, owing to the revival of an old flirtation of his in Warsaw, he doubtless would not leave Poland that season.

Besides Nathalie and her cousin Kavelin, several Viennese ladies, flat-backed, fair-skinned, exquisitely undulé by Pessel, old friends of Slavinsky; two or three young diplomats with their wives, and a half dozen Austrian officers made up the little company. A slight cloud, however, was cast upon the brilliance of the scene because Varia Bramtemberg had forgotten to notify Slavinsky until the last moment that she had been summoned to dine

with the Emperor. But she had written an eight-page, totally unpunctuated note to say that as the Emperor dined at six, which was too awful, for if there was anything she simply hated it was driving through the streets in broad daylight in full dress, with her best jewels looking and feeling like lumps of glass around her neck, she would come in later and stay with them until the very end, which she hoped would be at eight o'clock in the morning.

The long table was laden with spring flowers. Jonquils, narcissi, white lilacs and yellow roses. Great clumps of flowering shrubbery filled the corners of the big room and clustered beside the doorway. The air was pungent with the scent of fresh and glowing blossoms, and it was at the same time laden, drugged, with the wild and sensuous gypsy music.

Daisy sat at the center of the long table opposite her husband. She stared across at Slavinsky, astonished with herself, because he seemed so colorless; vivid yet empty and grotesque, like some creature met with in a dream. She reflected that her own emotional emptiness was amazing. "Queer," she thought. "He's been with other women. It's really happened. And I don't feel anything much. I don't feel anything at all." For she did not sense the simple primitive passions which flamed just below the frozen surface of her conscious mind. Hatred, Jealousy, Pride, Terror, and Love.

Daisy wore a tight princess dress of white satin, with a long white tulle train. A cloud of white tulle swathed her slender shoulders. Her eyes had a vacant, opaque look to them, and a silly fixed smile froze upon her lips. Across the table, one away from Slavinsky, sat Dimitri Kavelin, staring between mouthfuls at her small set face, diminished to childishness under its burden of shining hair.

Toward the end of dinner Varia Bramtemberg came in,

followed by several other guests, escaped at last from the Emperor's table. On her little head, with its tilted nose and drooping eyelids, sat a closed crown of turquoises and diamonds. A great turquoise necklace hung about her long throat. Her dress was a shining sheath of mauve sequins. Over her left shoulder she wore the wide turquoise ribbon of the Russian Order of St. Andrew. Those at the table applauded her entrance as if she were some favorite star appearing upon the stage. Slavinsky rose and, taking her by the hand, led her to the far end of the room, while the gypsy Berkes closed his eyes and, breaking into long wailing notes, drew near to the Duchess, fawning like a dog.

"Lorsque toute est fini," sang Varia in a voice surprisingly warm and loud and, turning, bending, waving her long arms, spontaneous, graceful, relaxed, she advanced, dancing, down the room, balancing her crown, the long tulle train of her mauve sequin dress foaming behind her.

Sipping from her champagne glass, Daisy gazed at Varia, and she wondered how a woman could live as long as she had and still sing and dance like a little child. Something made her turn and catch Kavelin's eyes. He leaned far across the narrow table. No one was looking—no one was listening. They might have been alone in the room.

"Now that Casimir Languszek is not here, perhaps I may dance more than just once with you," he said. "When this is finished, will you wait for me?"

As a matter of fact Kavelin did not dance particularly well, but already giddy with champagne, reckless, frozen-hearted, Daisy gave herself up to him. Had she been dancing with Casimir Languszek instead, even in her bitter disillusionment, she could not have so utterly

yielded herself, for Casimir would have fixed her shy self-consciousness with the artifice of an over-fastidious suggestion.

About four o'clock Daisy noticed that Slavinsky had disappeared, and Nathalie, seeing her anxious glance about the room, drew near and said to her, "Slavinsky has only just left. He said that he had to be at the race-track by seven, to watch the work-out of some horse he wants to buy. But of course you know all that." And seeing that Daisy still looked uneasy and dissatisfied, she added, "But, my dear, you know Slavinsky's *esprit contradictoire*. If we'd wanted to go to bed he'd have kept us all up, and now that we want to stay up, he's gone to bed. Daisy darling, don't be silly."

They danced until six in the morning. Kavelin, Varia, Nathalie, Daisy and two or three young officers, were the very last to leave. Coming out of the private dance room they stood in a group in the front hall of the Bristol, waiting for their fiacres; taking rather uncomplimentary stock of each other. Only Nathalie still looked neat and composed in the broad daylight, her olive skin cool as ivory, each blue-black hair shining in place. And again she drew near to Daisy and whispered from behind her shoulder: "Slavinsky should not leave you alone at dances like this. You are much too young and too giddy, my dear." And when Daisy averted her head, she gave her arm a little pinch before, picking up her flounces, she prepared to follow Varia up the stairs to her apartment on the first floor.

Daisy watched her go and then nervously pulled off her soiled gloves and threw back her cloak from her drooping shoulders.

"What did she say to you?" Kavelin lowered his rough

young voice so that the Austrians might not hear.

"Oh, she told me not to flirt with you so much, but I cannot see that it matters. Nobody cares, really."

"She has had a dozen lovers herself," he grumbled, and drew down his heavy mouth, like a sulky schoolboy.

But Daisy turned away from him protesting, for somehow she never could quite get over the shock of this idea.

Even in the broad daylight, and even though his forehead was mottled with wine and his corn-blue eyes were heavy and bloodshot, Kavelin still kept that leonine look of his, and Daisy surprised herself by thrilling to the very center of her being to the touch of his fingers upon her bare arm.

And she did not protest until after Kavelin had seated himself in the open fiacre beside her. Only then she insisted that she could not drive about the streets with him like that, in full daylight, with her evening wrap and bare head, and Kavelin ordered the driver, in his thick Russian-German, to put down the capote. While the top was being adjusted and all down the Kaentnerstrasse to Sachers', and up the stairs; which they climbed on foot, his arm about Daisy's yielding waist, Kavelin implored her to come to his rooms, if only for a few minutes. They stopped by his door on the floor just below the Slavinsky suite, and he took her into his arms, and whispered to her in words almost unintelligible from emotion.

"I have always wanted you. I have wanted you for so long. I cannot live without you," he said. And because it was the first time in her life any one had ever addressed to her these immemorial phrases, Daisy looked at him with solemn wondering. "Say you will come—oh, just for one minute. I swear not to touch you—I swear not. Say you'll just come," he begged her.

Daisy looked up and she looked down the hall. She

played with her soiled gloves and she delighted in the spectacle of this young blonde giant, standing there, abjectly pleading, trembling, before her. She could feel his hands, holding hers, tremble and turn cold, and finally, in a small voice, very cool, very collected, "Why, yes, I'll come," she said.

Kavelin took his key from his pocket and tried to adjust it into the door. But she broke away from him, saying that she could not come as she was.

"I must go upstairs and change first—I must change these clothes—and take a bath," she insisted.

He protested that she would never come back, but she stood firm and promised to return in half an hour, looking him in the eyes and holding up her right hand as if she were making a sacrament.

"I give you my word of honor," she said.

Daisy walked up the narrow side stairway to her rooms, trailing the torn and dirty train of her white tulle dress behind her.

The windows of the sitting room were open, and as she opened the door the draught blew her light evening wrap back from her shoulders. She was conscious now of no particular emotion other than a feeling of light, delicious excitement, as when in the old days she had climbed the last rickety steps of the wooden ladder up to the tiptop of St. James's steeple. Kavelin's kisses a few minutes before had stirred her, but she was not thinking of him at all as she tiptoed across the room to Slavinsky's door and noiselessly turned the handle. In the full sunlight there he lay, asleep, profoundly asleep in that infinite, remote, solemn sleep of his. And she stood there in her soiled ball dress and looked at him with a freakish light in her eyes. Then, leaving her door open behind her, she passed into her bathroom and boldly turned on the

noisy spigots in the tub. Oh, it might just happen that he would awaken. It might just happen. But she did not really think so, for noise had no effect on him, once he fell asleep. She dried herself leisurely, powdered her body and sprayed her hair with a new tea rose perfume. And she looked at herself in the mirror and worried because her hips were not more rounded and because her breasts were not heavy and full like Nathalie's.

"I'm getting mature as fast as I can," she thought, sniffing the scent of her new flower perfume. But the old feeling of inadequacy chilled her mood, and she feared that Kavelin might find her after all not much to his liking. As she sat down to rub a little cold cream on the tips of her heels, which had chafed from too much dancing, she began to think with the peculiar exhilarated lucidity which comes sometimes in moments of crisis. She charged herself to keep steady, to keep cool, not to flinch, as if she were engaged in some sporting event which took all her skill and all her courage to negotiate. She decided to put on street clothes and a hat, in case any one should meet her in the corridor. And she went over in her mind the few toilet articles with which she should fill her little handbag. If Slavinsky met her, she meant to say that her head ached after so much champagne and she had gone out for a walk in the cool morning. She decided this and other details as she searched through a pile of underwear for her very best chemise, one of pink batiste with a two-inch wide border of valenciennes and her crown and initials beautifully embroidered on the left side just above the heart.

She walked down the stairs wondering at herself for not feeling a more vivid emotion, for, in fact, her only sensation was that of wild and reckless adventure; and she was not thinking of Kavelin at all when she knocked

on his door. The sight of him, standing there freshly bathed and shaven, in a blue brocade dressing gown over his pajamas, came as a real surprise. How very odd he looked, she thought, in that soft, low, white silk collar.

Daisy was both relieved and disenchanted to receive a huge bunch of yellow roses late that afternoon from Kavelin, and to read the enclosed card. "Hoping that we may meet in the summer," he had written in English. Although he had told her more than once while they were dancing that he expected to continue his journey to Paris with Varia and Nathalie that day, still she felt that he should have stayed over, if only as a concession to her pride. Although it was natural for her to have a real sentiment and tenderness for flowers, she tossed these roses aside behind a sofa without even unwrapping them, and not yet thoroughly awake—she had slept most of the afternoon—she passed into her bathroom and prepared to bathe and dress for dinner.

Fascinated, incredulous, she stared at herself in the long glass of the bathroom door, astonished at the thought that only a few hours before this delicate and unsullied body of hers had abandoned itself to Kavelin's brutish and ineffectual embrace. She felt no scruples of conscience—no exact remorse. Only a naïve disillusionment; that one so abundantly masculine in appearance should prove so atonic a lover. Amazed at her own audacity she admired her achievement. A jubilee of the spirit. She rejoiced with herself and believed now that she had crossed the Rubicon, she had of necessity left behind her haggard worry and her pain. Untrammelled, courageous, alone, she was to be like Varia; like Nathalie; and like the pink-cheeked Marietta. They had all had their own bad days in the beginning. Nathalie had told her so. And yet they had

all three learned at last to float over the surface of life, easily, gracefully, without a care for yesterday or tomorrow.

Daisy had had no further conversation of any interest with Slavinsky before her stepfather, Oliver Redmond, arrived almost without notice in Vienna. Early on the morning of his coming, Daisy had an appointment with one of the famous women-specialists of Vienna. He had nothing to report save that she was in a nervous and anemic condition, and he recommended that she pass six weeks at Franzenbad, the sooner the better. But she protested, objecting that she could not leave town just then. Later on, may be. She could go some time in the summer.

And with bitter and astonished self-disillusionment she realized that she was not cured of the old malignancy and that she had postponed going to Franzenbad only because she could not bear to leave Slavinsky to his own devices, for so long a time in Vienna, alone.

Daisy met Redmond at the station. He was sunburned and ruddy. A little thick-nosed, she thought, and she wondered if he might not have taken to serious drinking. And she wondered, too, what he would think if he knew that she had been tipsy herself on several occasions, or what he would say if he knew of her escapade with Kavelin.

They had only a short while together before it was time to dress for dinner and, sitting by the window in the clear, late afternoon light, Daisy for the first time had some sense of guilt and felt unequal to the task of meeting his eyes. Redmond, seeing her embarrassment, did most of the talking, relating this or that of his trip home, and several long anecdotes of his hunting days in Africa.

Slavinsky did not appear until dinner time, which he had ordered downstairs in the nearly empty dining room.

Toward the end of dinner Redmond looked down at his plate in silence, and then raised his glass of Johannesburg as if he had taken a sudden resolution and were about to make a speech. "I have a piece of news for you. Now, don't let me knock you down with a feather," he announced. "I am engaged to marry Mrs. Rutherford. You remember her, Daisy? A friend of your mother's and a childhood friend of mine. That is why I must get back to-morrow. I just hopped on here to see that you were all right and in good shape. And I must say, you do look lovely, although, perhaps, a little too thin," he added, with a shade of anxiety in his voice. "Mrs. Rutherford is in Paris now, but we won't be married for some little time yet." And he paused on the brink of saying that they had decided to wait several months after the conventional year of mourning.

Slavinsky raised his glass. "Your very good health," he bowed, mock-smiling. For he was anything but pleased at the news, although, having once met Mrs. Rutherford, he reflected that she was too far advanced in years to endanger Daisy's prospects by an increase in the family.

"You should both come to visit us in Russia this summer. It's charming in July," he continued, still smiling, intent on not letting Oliver slip too far out of the range of Daisy's influence. But Oliver replied that he and Mrs. Rutherford were to be married at Newport some time in August, probably, and then added politely that he hoped that both Slavinsky and Daisy would come to America for the wedding.

Slavinsky seemed to turn this proposition over in his mind while Daisy laid her hand in Oliver's and looked at him with questioning eyes.

"Oh, I'm so glad. So happy, for you," she cried. "Dear Oliver, you'll never be lonely again." But her voice

sounded flat even to her own ears, empty of the warmth and enthusiasm she had wanted to put into it. For Oliver, she had always felt, belonged to her, standing steady as a rock, in the background of her life. And now it seemed to her as if she were about to lose him.

As they rose from their seats Slavinsky remained beside his chair.

"Mr. Redmond," he said. "I propose to you that you and I have our coffee and cigars here. There are some few things I should like to talk over with you."

"As you like," Redmond replied, and sitting down again he fixed his blue eyes on the tablecloth.

The next morning Redmond came to breakfast with Daisy in her sitting room before taking the train. Daisy covered one half of a roll with butter and thick honey, and held it out to him.

"Remember?" He nodded his head. And their thoughts carried them back to St. Petersburg, to Susan's bedroom where they had so often breakfasted together, huddled for warmth beside the big porcelain stove, and to their old unspoken alliance.

"Daisy, are you happy?"

"Oh, yes. Perfectly."

"You don't want anything? You don't need anything? Any money?"

"No. Nothing at all. Nothing, really. We have—together, more than enough."

"Perhaps I had better tell you. Your husband asked—wanted to borrow quite a large sum of money from me last night."

"Oh, I don't know why. I don't know anything about it," she cried.

"Question of mortgages. He is anxious to buy more

land, he says, for an investment. The usual thing. Daisy, do you mind my asking you? What did you do with the ten thousand dollars I gave you for a wedding present?"

"I do mind your asking me."

"Well, never mind. It doesn't matter," he soothed her. "I might be willing to pay off some of these mortgages for your sake if I were not convinced it would be like pouring money down a rat-hole. You remember, Daisy, I told you——"

"Oh, yes. I remember." And she averted her eyes, and ran her fingers up along the burnished surface of her hair.

But Oliver had determined to get at the truth before he left her.

"From something Slavinsky said, I gathered—of course, I might be mistaken—but I plainly gathered that you and he are not getting on any too well."

"I'm perfectly happy," Daisy repeated, and flushed, even to the whites of her eyes.

Oliver turned and looked at her and saw that she was close to tears.

"Time is so short," he said. "Don't let's beat about the bush, dear. Why don't you pack up a few things and come along with me to Paris, for a while? Mrs. Rutherford will be delighted to put you up at her apartment for any length of time. We could all sail for home together and your husband could join you later—maybe for the wedding at Newport."

"Newport?" She shrugged her shoulders.

"Mrs. Rutherford really wants to see you."

"You must be crazy, Oliver."

"She would be delighted to have you," he repeated, with dogged patience. "I can only tell you what she said to me. She said, 'Bring her back if she is unhappy.' She

has always remembered you from the time she saw you in Chicago. You were selling lemonade——” He stopped, visibly moved, trying to smile. “From what Slavinsky said last night, I gathered he would not object to your coming with me,” he persisted.

Daisy rose and crossed the room, and stood perfectly motionless with her back to him, looking down on the street.

“I cannot help that,” she said finally in a queer little voice. “I told you once before that Serge is all that I care for in the world. It’s still true. I simply cannot—I couldn’t possibly leave him.”

Oliver waited for a full minute, short of breath from anger and suppressed emotion. He had had his experience with her in Paris, and he knew that short of physical violence, nothing could budge her for the time being, at least. But he managed to control himself, and came across to pat her on the shoulder.

“Well, good-bye, dear little Daisy,” he said. “Write soon. Maybe you’ll change your mind and come over for the wedding after all. If ever you get in any trouble, let me know, Daisy. And remember the message Mrs. Rutherford sent to you. I hope you will change your mind.”

“Oh, Mrs. Rutherford,” sneered Daisy, and she closed her eyes for fear he would see the tears in them when she kissed him good-bye.

Since his unsuccessful attempt to persuade Redmond to back him financially, Slavinsky had become even more secretive, more withdrawn within his implacable ego, more ugly and uncertain in temper. He returned with Daisy to the Ukraine shortly after Redmond’s departure and left again for Vienna alone, a few days later. When he was at home he seemed to be always upon the eve of

some new journey. Sometimes Daisy would not even know he was planning to go until, coming into the dining room for lunch or dinner, she would find his place at table empty.

Of her escapade with Kavelin she thought very little, pushing it down into the shadows of her mind. Although she never came to a thorough accounting with herself, when, on rare occasions, she tried to face the significance of her own offense, she felt no regret, no sense of moral wrong, only the physical memory of her disgust and shame.

Sometimes, still, Slavinsky would pass the whole night in Daisy's room. Sometimes she had the illusion that in his own unfathomable way, he loved her. And sometimes she almost persuaded herself that he had never been physically unfaithful to her. He had been only angry, perhaps. Maybe he had been gambling at the Jockey Club that night, and had come home in an ugly mood because of his losses, and had wanted to punish her for the violent scene she had made him, sitting there by the window, in street dress, at six o'clock in the morning with her hair coming down: like a crazy thing.

But these were her best days. Usually she was devoured by jealousy, and tortured by her sense of helpless defeat. She told herself she hated him. Sometimes she longed for his death. Sometimes for her own—for anything which would free her from the yoke of this man who, since the first day she had seen him, had been her master.



PART SIX

ONE day toward the end of August Slavinsky decided to go alone to the Crimea and pay a month's visit to Varia Bramtemberg, who, with a household of St. Petersburg friends, including Marietta Lichtenwald, was spending the short summer season there. And Daisy, uninformed of his intentions, but aware from the quantity of luggage prepared that Slavinsky was planning to absent himself for some considerable time, resolved to accept the old Princess Catherina's invitation to come to her country estate in Podolia, whenever she was lonely and her husband was away. In the same mail with Princess Catherina's letter was a vague note from Casimir Languszeko, saying that he expected to be somewhere about in the neighborhood the last weeks of August.

Daisy decided to drive herself in a small new American runabout, lately arrived from Odessa, behind her own four dappled-gray Moscow trotters. To her surprise, at the last moment Jacob, the moon-faced, slant-eyed one, perched himself on the pile of her hand luggage, in the crumple of the little wagon, his head cramped beneath the seat, his short legs dangling in the air. And when she protested to Slavinsky, who was standing in the vestibule of the door, watching her departure, he answered that he was punishing Jacob, the idiot, for forgetting his bedroom slippers on the last trip they took together. "I'm breaking in a new boy," he said. "And the old lady will be delighted to have an extra footman to carry up your bath water and take in the dishes from the kitchen to the table, which is a mile away." One of the leaders reared and broke away

from the stable boy at his head, interrupting any further conversation, for Daisy had almost more than she could manage, steadying her horses down into their long rhythmic trot, as they sped along the driveway, the little feather-weight wagon swaying perilously behind them. Beside Daisy sat the square-chinned old Ivan. His mustache reached almost to his ears. He took great pride in Daisy's driving, for she had been an apt pupil, although less experienced with horses than the English lady who had preceded her as the *barynia* of the castle. And he watched over her now paternally to see if she would judge her distance correctly; loop the near leader's rein in just proportion over her forefinger; clamp down her thumb in time; pay out again judiciously, as they took the left turn into the open road.

The full moon hung like a magic lantern, low in the sky, as the late northern sun still faded in the west, when Daisy turned into the Princess's long driveway, cracking her whip (an accomplishment she had as yet not thoroughly mastered) to announce her approach. As she paused to divest herself of her long pongee dust coat in the hall, she heard a shower of silvery notes from the piano in the drawing room, and she smiled with delight as she guessed that Casimir Languszeko had already arrived. Partly because he rather fancied the picture of himself at the piano, sitting alone in the moonlight, his long fantastic silhouette shadowed upon the floor, and partly because he was deeply stirred by the Chopin nocturne which he was just ending, Casimir went on playing while Daisy stood there, listening in the dark, her hat in her hands. And when he crossed the room at last and kissed her finger-tips and said, "I knew you would come. I have been playing for you for hours and hours," Daisy felt a new exhilaration, a ripple of happiness and release,

not quite like anything she had ever felt before. Even when the old Princess came in Daisy kissed her with delight, not minding for once the touch of the old lady's mustache upon her cheek.

Princess Catherina wore, as usual, an Irish lace bed-jacket over a full black satin skirt which, no matter how often she had it adjusted, reared itself up over the wide protuberance of her abdomen and dipped to the floor behind. And Daisy observed again, when the men servants brought in the candles, that the old lady had kept much of her falcon beauty, even if her neck was suspiciously dark in the creases which almost hid her pearls.

Shortly after midnight tea Princess Catherina went to bed. Lighted by gold candelabra carried by two Cossack footmen, she walked off with immense dignity and heaven only knows what concupiscent conspiring going on in her old head. With the last sound of her footsteps, Casimir blew out the remaining lamps and candles and sat down at the piano again. Daisy reclined, lost in the shadows, in an armchair beside him. The moonlight fell upon his blond head, making fantastic silhouettes upon the floor. He played love songs of the Ukraine—songs of longing, of passionate beseeching—one soul crying to another. Then, breaking off abruptly, pausing before touching the keys again, he played the waltz melody to which they had danced the night of her first day's hunting. "Do you remember? Do you remember?" he asked and, seizing her by the hand, he led the way into the moon-flooded garden. They walked quite sedately up and down the paths, lightly gossiping of this and that. Only when they parted for the night he tried to draw her close to him. But she averted her head and broke away from him. He did not insist but waved good night to her blithely and let her mount the stairs to her own room alone.

In the morning they met in the garden, in the path just beyond the sundial. Daisy wore a leghorn sun hat. She pulled the wide brim down to hide her face, an orange ribbon streamer in each hand. Casimir carried a volume of Baudelaire beneath his arm. There was some subtle physical similarity between the two. Seeing them coming from a distance, one might have taken them for brother and sister. They had the same small head and flowing, graceful outline.

"*Jeune sauvage*," he began. "I am going to read you this morning some perfect and beautiful verse. Divine barbarian, will you listen to me?"

Ah, delicious flattery! Daisy became suddenly conscious of that release and exhilaration of spirit which comes sometimes to very shy people when they appear disguised in fancy dress.

"Oh, that would be lovely," she mocked him. "Maybe I'll learn my letters for myself one day." And she took his hand with a gay smile, to climb upon a little foot-bridge. They came to a birch grove in one corner of an enormous wheat-field, which rolled itself out and disappeared at last over the very brink of the horizon. Daisy sank down prettily in the dappled shade upon the grass, and took a deep breath of the sweet, pungent, exciting air. Remembering that many people had admired the metallic sheen of her hair in the sunshine, she took off her hat and moved her head a little to one side to catch a ray of light and, with an expression which she rightly considered to be one of wistful longing, she gazed out across the immense landscape. When Casimir dropped his volume of verse upon the ground and moved nearer to her and asked her why she looked so sad, she repeated several phrases she had invented during the preceding night.

"Your country makes me sad," she said. "It is too big, too overwhelming for the people who have to live in it. I prefer more intimate things. In the winter it kills the soul. And in the summer, even looking across this great brooding fertile field, it is sad. It is always sad. The proportion is wrong. Just listen to the chant of the peasants!" She held up a finger, and they heard the song of the harvesters, hidden somewhere behind the trees from sight. "Listen—how hopeless it is, their song—tender, compassionate. But heartbroken and resigned."

"Maybe it is we who make the country sad." He caught a bit of thistledown floating in the air, and blew it aside. "We who belong to this beautiful country were born with tears and sorrow in our souls. Has it ever occurred to you that it is the sadness of our own souls which broods upon and shadows the whole land?"

Daisy thought this a fascinating whimsy and she was embarrassed because she could think of nothing further to say. But she smiled at him and let her gaze rest in his. He noticed again, for he had not yet put on his glasses, the extraordinary golden flecks in the sea-green of his eyes. "Pick up your book," she said, edging slightly away. "Read to me before I become quite stupid. There's not a moment to be lost."

"But it would be the greatest pity to change you, *petite sauvage*. Once you are educated you will lose something of your charm. One sees—by your dark excitable eyes and your passionate mouth, that you are made for love. And nothing else interests you. You will not listen if I read to you. But I will read you a poem if you insist upon it, only to calm my own mind, for it requires calming. It is called "Recueillement" and it is one of the really perfect and delicious things in all the world. But you will not understand it," and he began, still smiling to himself.

"Sois sage, ô ma douleur et tiens-toi plus tranquille.
Tu réclamais le Soir; il descend; le voici:
Une atmosphère obscure enveloppe la ville,
Aux uns portant la paix, aux autres le souci."

Pendant que des mortels la multitude vile
Sous le fouet du Plaisir, ce bourreau sans merci,
Va cueillir des remords dans la fête servile,
Ma Douleur, donne-moi la main; viens par ici,

Loins d'eux. Vois se pencher les défuntes Années,
Sur les balcons du ciel, en robes surannées;
Surgir du fond des eaux le Regret souriant;

Le Soleil moribond s'endormir sous une arche,
Et, comme un long linceul traînant à l'Orient,
Entends, ma chère, entends la douce Nuit qui marche."

When he had finished Casimir took off his glasses again, dropped his book and began to bite at a piece of long grass. "Tell me, now, what do you think of it?" he asked, pretending to question her seriously, and Daisy, who had understood next to nothing of the verse, picked up the volume and averted her eyes. "What page was it on?" she asked, bending her head.

Casimir laughed out loud. But even his laugh had a warm, persuasive appeal to it. "*Petite sauvage*," he said, helping her to her feet, for she had started to rise, "Come, let us go back into the garden. It makes me very nervous to sit with you, so close to you, here."

Several weeks floated by, each day like the last, only a little more intense and filled with a little more emotion. Slavinsky gave no further sign of life. The old Princess and Casimir knew through their own correspondence of his whereabouts, but when Daisy tried indirectly to question them they both pretended ignorance.

Princess Catherina had no objection in the world to Slavinsky's infidelities. But she suspected that Daisy's childless condition was not wholly due to her own physical deficiencies, and according to her code if, after a reasonable time, a man could not give his wife children she should be prepared to accept some contributing aid. Besides, although Slavinsky had for years been one of her special favorites, he was several thousand miles away at the time. Casimir had his youth and a new flaming passion to recommend him, two qualities which never failed of their appeal. She watched Daisy blooming day by day with a fresh radiance, a new lovely animation of the spirit. And she chuckled to herself when she saw her walking by, her head tilted back, laughing in the sunshine with the air of a woman who knows she is adorable, even at her worst, in her lover's eyes. Her passionate old heart melted to see Daisy's taut nerves relax in the warmth of Casimir's flattery and devotion—flattery which became each day more sincere—devotion which was beginning to turn his own head. Her swarthy hands, covered with preposterous rings and bracelets, crossed upon her stomach, she sat aside and watched the development of Casimir's tenderness and passionate desire. And presently, pretending the need of some replastering in the left wing of the house, she moved Casimir to the right, two doors down the hall from Daisy's room.

Late one afternoon the two sat together in the birch grove where Casimir had first read to her from Baudelaire's book of poems, and Daisy saw that Casimir's hands, clasped tightly together, trembled and that his face had turned quite pale. "It must be true, then, it must be true—I love me," she rejoiced within herself. And Casimir, seeing the look in her eyes, judging that his hour had at last come, fell on his knees beside her. She did not

resist his kisses, strange, vicious kisses, unlike any she had known, which made her close her eyes and long to swoon away.

That night he came to her room. And so exquisitely he approached her that it was she who opened her arms to him, trembling with a new desire.

But at dawn she looked at him as at some alien enemy creature, lying there enmeshed in her hair. "I don't love you. Really, it's queer, Casimir," she said, "but I'd rather not see you again." She watched to see if he would flinch, hoping she had really hurt him; for unconsciously in her heart she had made out of him the scapegoat for her own humiliation and for her pain.

That afternoon she failed to keep the rendezvous she had given him in the birch grove where they had met the day before. She lay languidly half-dressed on her bed, savoring the thought of his discomfiture, held by a feeling of stale dislike. And that night she locked her door. She heard him turn the handle and, whispering, beseech her, and she listened, smiling to herself, insensible to his pleading.

For one reason and another Casimir's first light infatuation for Daisy turned overnight into a real love-madness. His facile imagination associated her with the young and delectable creatures of the wild. Untamed, he thought her, and passionate and tender. Her body was the loveliest, if not the most perfect he had ever seen; and he told her so. Her untrammelled emotions and her ignorance enchanted him, and he believed that it was his mission to teach her many things for their mutual delight. Her caprice and her unreasoning aversions, the quick, hateful feline strokes she dealt him, he forgave her, although they served their purpose and tortured him for the moment. He excused her, believing that these manifesta-

tions were merely the struggles of a free wild spirit against the tyranny of love. He aimed to possess her heart and her mind as well as her body. She was to be the perfect mistress, the creature of his own creation, the child-woman of his dreams.

One evening toward the end of September Daisy received word that Slavinsky was on his way back to Volynia and, in spite of Casimir's pleading, she made arrangements to leave next morning for home. And that last night of theirs together Casimir told her that he had never known what real love was before. And because he believed himself, she believed him. They planned to meet again in a few weeks at Stasna for the Slavinsky hunting season. And Daisy exulted in her heart when she saw that, as he kissed her good-bye, his lips quivered and his eyes filled up with tears.

Coming out of her room at daybreak, Casimir fancied that he saw Jacob, Slavinsky's valet, the moon-faced one, like a shadow, just turning the stairs. But he did not mention this to Daisy when he met her in the garden just before her leaving, fearing to spoil the rapture of their last hurried adieux.

One evening a fortnight later, Casimir sat bending over a desk in the writing room of the Club des Chasseurs, in Warsaw, one delicate hand, spread fingers wide apart, upon the letter paper. The light from a standing lamp at his elbow shone upon his fair head. "Beloved," he wrote to Daisy, "I have opened my letter of this morning to add a few hurried lines. And yet, I can only repeat myself. I can think of nothing else to say excepting that I love you." He paused then, striving to create some new way to express what he had already said. Tapping the end of his pen against the desk, he happened to glance

up across his shoulder and he saw Slavinsky standing there, perhaps a dozen feet away in the doorway, gazing directly at him, with that black, inscrutable look of his.

"Oh," said Casimir, waving his left hand in a graceful salute, while with the other he picked up the blotter and covered his letter. "When did you come to town? I thought you were lost in the wilds of Volynia. I say, are you gambling to-night? Who are at the tables?" And smiling, unhurried, he turned in his chair, reached for a match and lit a cigarette.

Without answering, Slavinsky smiled faintly, raised his hand with one of his rather theatrical gestures and pursued his way down the hall. Walking to the door, Casimir made sure that Slavinsky would not for the moment return and, adding a hurried page to his letter, he told Daisy what had happened and begged her for her own sake to take added precautions in the future about her mail.

"You say that no one has ever taken the slightest interest in your correspondence. But I shall write you only the most conventional letters from now on, until I see you," he added. "You said Slavinsky was in Vienna. Did you expect him to come to Warsaw? When we meet again I will relate to you a little incident of a blotter. I made a little mistake and it has left me uneasy in my mind."

When Casimir came into the gaming room a few minutes later he was disturbed to see that Slavinsky was not there. Now Slavinsky had taken a droshky back to his hotel; he had awakened Jacob, the moon-faced one asleep hunched up on a straight-backed chair outside his door, and had ordered him to catch the morning train to Volynia. He was to stop for nothing until he reached home. He was to take from the mail bag all letters addressed to the Princess and postmarked Warsaw.

It might take a few days; a week or more. Mails were slow. But the letter would come. He could not read, of course, triple ass that he was, Jacob. "But you will have to find a way to get that letter. That way is your own affair. I'll beat you to a jelly if you fail me. Outgoing letters written by the Princess—you understand me, letters written *by* the Princess—are also to be held until I come home." He did not mention when that would be.

Slavinsky took his time. He had some business in town, some pleasures, also, to attend to. He neglected neither. In the meantime, Daisy could not understand why she heard nothing more from Casimir, when her other mail and the foreign papers arrived. She had always flattered herself that he wrote five letters to her one. Possibly he was offended at last? Or was he growing tired of her? She had been brought up on the theory that all men soon wearied of women they had possessed, because in their hearts they must, from the beginning, have despised them, and she resolved to try to be kinder to Casimir and more passionate if ever they met again. He had been so madly infatuated with her. So delicate. So charming. And thinking it over, she could not bear to lose him. Yet, although she thought of Casimir every waking hour of the day and night, Slavinsky lay like a stone at the bottom of her heart. And when the post bag came in the evening, she searched first for a letter from him. When nothing came, as he rarely wrote, she would pick out Casimir's letter, if one happened to arrive, and hide it in her blouse. Sometimes she would carry it around for hours before reading it.

About two weeks after the scene in the Club des Chasseurs Slavinsky drove up unannounced, late one

night. Daisy was sitting upstairs in her bedroom reading an early edition of Rousseau's "Confessions." The obsolete print and coarse pages, besides many words she could not understand, made her progress blundering and slow. She heard the horses and the sound of Slavinsky's carriage on the gravel outside and, covering her shoulders with a wrap, ran along the draughty hallway and down stairs. She clung to him and looked up into his face, her naked soul shining in her eyes, while he stood there giving his precise orders for the supper which he wished to have prepared for him.

"Aren't you going to kiss me?" she asked, finally drawing back a little.

"Why, no." He stood there smiling thinly, rubbing his hands, for the night was chilly, apparently very well pleased with himself and the world. And in truth, he was in an excellent humor, for he had caught a sly look and Jacob's low murmured "*tak*" as the man helped him off with his coat. "Go to your room, little filly. I will come up to see you after my supper."

How very tall he was in the dimly lighted room, standing there glancing now at her, now at the fire behind him, now at one of the servants or at a picture on the wall. And, gazing across at him, she felt herself utterly defenseless, swamped again by the old fatal sense of surrender.

"But can't I sit with you while you eat?" She asked, her voice gone quite husky.

"No." Pleasantly, indifferently, he refused her.

Daisy was conscious of turning pale, turning sick, with terror. What had happened then? What did he know? What would he do to her? Would he leave her at last? Would he leave her?

"Oh, it is too cold down here, anyway." The Irish im-

her sought for some last word, no matter how inadequate, and she walked very slowly out of the room. But suddenly, as she mounted the stairs, the color flooded back into her face again and she felt herself stirred and lifted by a bitter, willful fighting mood. But she held herself in check and let an interminable hour pass by before she came downstairs again and planted herself before his chair by the fire, where he was finishing his coffee in the hall.

"If you have anything to say to me, say it now," she said. "I am tired and I want to go to bed. And what is more, I am going to leave this place for good in the morning."

"You cannot, of course, ever leave this place without my permission."

"Oh, can't I?" she jeered, thrusting forward her little chin.

The faint smile still wavered along Slavinsky's lips. And although he was beginning to feel irritated, for she had disturbed his coffee and cigar, he was not yet really angry. He had supped too well, and he had locked in the strong box of his great walnut desk three or four letters with which he proposed to oblige Papa Redmond to settle accounts, past and present, and one or two for the future.

"If you will come with me to my office," he said. And puffing at his cigar to make sure he had lit it well, he rose slowly to his feet.

What was he going to do? Her wrap had fallen off, and her arms and shoulders shook visibly beneath her flimsy silk house dress. But her spirit soared upward like thin wild flame.

Slavinsky unlocked first the right hand drawer of his desk, then within, the iron partition which occupied half

its space while Daisy peered sideways. Bundles of letters neatly piled. One of them she fancied was tied with a pale ribbon. Slavinsky took out a package of letters, bound with an elastic, and turned his chair around to face her. Then he coughed a little, removed from his lower lip an imaginary shred of tobacco, and pretended to look at it absently between his thumb and finger. He was enjoying himself. Finally he selected a package of letters from the drawer, held them up to her, and then tossed them aside upon the desk.

"Languszeko's last three letters to you—your last two letters to him," he said.

"Your filthy, spying Jacob." . . . Her shaking voice was almost too low for him to hear. "You sent him back ahead of you to sneak and spy and steal from me. Give me back my letters. They're mine! Give them to me," and she made a rush for the desk and succeeded in snatching them up. But he caught her hand and crushed her fingers together until the letters fell upon the floor. Something in this violent contact stirred the wolf in him. And he went on crushing the bones of her hands until she shuddered and cried out with helpless fury and with pain. He caught hold of the great chignon of her hair and jerked her head back against her shoulders so that her throat arched rigid to the breaking point and she sank upon her knees and like some trapped creature of the wild moaned with futile rage and shame.

"I'd kill you if you were a real woman." His voice was just above a whisper. "But you aren't worth it. A damned little fool like you." And jerking her to her feet again he struck her one deliberate and terrific blow. Daisy fell without uttering a sound, across the desk and to the floor, and he left her.

When she had regained some measure of her conscious-

ness she crept upstairs to her own room, feeling rather more nauseated than anything else, and locked the door behind her. Moved by an impulse of which she was not yet fully aware, she began in a feeble, yet persistent way, to gather a few things together and to drop them one after another in a heap beside her nightgown on the bed. A toothbrush, a comb; her mother's and father's photographs framed together, in a red morocco frame. Her little jewel case. Money? She had none. But she remembered her check-book on the Postsparkassen in Vienna. Gradually the fog lifted in her mind, leaving it strangely simplified and clear. Should she take her great gold-fitted bag? But she didn't know where it was kept and it was too heavy, anyhow. No, not that. And clasping her forehead, for it nauseated her to bend over, she picked up a pair of walking shoes from the closet floor, a few underclothes and a thin woolen wrapper. A box of face powder. A jar of cold cream.

And every now and then, in the midst of her preparations, she held her breath and listened for the sound of Slavinsky's footstep—that careless, slow clip-clop of his bedroom slippers coming along the bare wooden floor.

But now that she had her belongings together, what should she wrap them in? Her eyes fell upon a brown silk petticoat. But she had no string. It would take lots of string. A pillow case? One of the great, stout linen pillow cases with the scalloped embroidered edge? Why, yes, that was just the thing. And when she had filled it, she tied up the ends as best she could with a shoelace. Then she slipped into her sealskin coat and a small black traveling cap, stuffed a black lace veil and a pair of gloves into her pocket. By now she was beginning to think quite clearly and carefully, her mind burned white

with excess of emotion. A streak of blood showed across the back of her hand and she dipped it in the water pitcher and wiped it off with a towel, without thinking to look in the mirror for the cut she could feel on her forehead. Once more on the threshold of the door she paused and held her breath and listened. Stood there listening, suspending her life—listening still, for the careless sound of Slavinsky's footsteps coming down the long, bare hall. Listening—listening in vain.

Then she lifted her pack, slung it back over her shoulder and, turning to the left along the corridor and down the narrow unclean stairs, lit by one oil lamp stuck in the wall, she groped her way to the basement floor.

She heard the snoring of the house boys and stable men as she passed their common room. The stink of their heavy greased boots and unclean bodies sickened her nostrils. She crept through the door dividing the second—from the first-class servants below stairs, her heart in her mouth, for somewhere here slept Jacob, the yellow moon-faced one. She walked on tiptoe up another short flight and opened the door at the top which led into the last division, just below Slavinsky's rooms. Then, breathing more easily, she shifted her bundle from one shoulder to the other and passed the comely housekeeper's room, then the superintendent's apartment where he lived with his wife and children, and came at last to Jim Marston's quarters. A line of light shone from beneath his door. She knocked twice, waited and rapped again. Marston came to the door in his shirtsleeves and stood there, blocking the way, looking at her, unable to grasp the evidence of his own eyes.

She pushed by him and closed the door behind him. "Maybe you had better lock the door," she said.

He stared at the blood on her cheek, at the odd bundle

she had dropped on the floor, and when she saw that he had not yet cleared his mind she came close to him and jerked at his sleeve, like a child demanding attention.

"You must take me away. You must get me out of here to-night," she cried. "You must get me over the frontier. You must."

He asked her finally if she had a passport, and his voice, always constrained, sounded husky and very low.

"I haven't any. We will have to get one somehow." She tried to smile.

He stared at her, still trying to collect his thoughts, to concentrate entirely upon the business in hand. And seeing that he stood there, rigid, unyielding, rubbing his thumb back and forth across his swarthy chin, Daisy took a step back and held out her hands dramatically.

"You must get me out of here. You must," she cried, her voice breaking. "You're the only friend I have. You must help me. No one else will." She slipped her heavy fur coat back from her shoulders as if she could not bear the weight of it, and sank down upon the arm of the chair in which he had been reading beside the lamp on the center table. And there she perceived a crude photograph of herself, taken by the village photographer, standing bareheaded, a parasol over one shoulder. She stared at it, and something stirred in her mind, but she could not then grasp its real significance. But when Marston saw that she was gazing at her own photograph, he clasped his hands behind his back and answered her.

"Very well. I will take you, as you wish. But we'd better lose no time," he said. And he turned quickly and unlocked a small secretary standing beside the iron bedstead, and took out a revolver and an old wallet which he slipped into his pocket.

She did not notice that he flushed dark red when he

told her, half questioning, that unfortunately he had very little money on hand at the time.

"I haven't any, either," she answered, as if she thought it did not much matter. "I brought my Viennese check-book, only it's no good here. Do you think you have enough to get to Vienna? I have friends there, and I have some money in the bank there."

"Oh, we'll manage somehow. We can borrow on the horses if we have to," he said. He slipped on his fur coat and caught up a bearskin rug from the bed.

"You may need this before we get through," he said.

"Wait a minute." She held up her hand. "Don't you want to pack something?"

"My God, yes." His face lightened almost to a smile. "My traveling bag. That's lucky. It's still packed. I have only just now got in from Kief."

They were both beginning to speak in quite a natural tone, and Daisy glanced for the first time at herself in the mirror which was hanging over the rude wooden washstand. Without thinking exactly what she was about she dipped a corner of a towel in the pitcher and bathed the fresh bloodstain upon her cheek, while Marston, plainly worried, gazed with harassed eyes about the room, trying hard to think clearly, forget nothing.

"Maybe you had better stop here until the horses are ready. I'll come back and fetch you," he said.

"Oh, no, no. Don't leave me here alone." She pressed her hand upon her lips, fearing she had cried out too loud.

"I think you should have a drop of brandy before you start." Marston's brows were still contracted, still trying painfully to attend to every detail. "I nearly forgot the flask."

She drank down what he had given her, without flinching.

"I used to hate brandy," she observed, wiping her lips with her finger.

At the door he turned about and paused once more, and she noticed vaguely that the lamp he held up to light her down the hall accentuated the odd contrast between the brutal lines of his mouth and his clean, fine jaws and chin.

"Do you realize, Princess," he asked, still holding the doorknob in his hand, "what a scandal this is going to make? I feel I should tell you. Do you realize fully?"

"I can't help that. It's too late now," she said, and he drew back to let her pass and locked the door behind them.

With the help of two sleepy stable boys, Marston harnessed Daisy's four gray Moscow trotters to the little single-seated American runabout. He slung his traveling bag and Daisy's bundle into the rumble behind the seat and gathered up the whip and reins.

"Hurry," he called to her as she lifted her long skirts and prepared to climb up beside him, for the leaders threatened to plunge away from the sleepy boys at their heads. But Daisy thought there was no cause for hurrying, for neither Slavinsky nor Casimir nor any one else in all this beautiful and desolate land would ever raise a finger to bring her back again.

It was a fairly clear, frosty night, one of the first frosts of the season. Across the immense mysterious heavens the moon, sulking behind great rolling clouds, filtered her magical light.

They kept silent until the four horses, choppy at first in their gait, swung into their long rhythmic stride.

Nestling within her high fur collar, wrapped stiffly in a double fur rug, Daisy looked out across the brooding and silent landscape. "It's over. All over. Finished," she

kept repeating to herself. "I'll never see this tree again, nor that one, nor that pond, nor that hillside—never. Never that village. Never, Never. I'll never see that cross upon that church again." And this idea made her feel very desolate, and empty of all hope. For "never" is a fearful word for any one as young as she to be obliged to say.

They drove through a village, stark, dead asleep, like a corpse. Not a light. Only the savage bark of the wolf dogs; one, razor-backed, rotten with mange, ran along beside the team and snapped at the leaders. Both Daisy and Marston had a moment of anxiety, thinking that the shying jibbing pair might kick their traces. "But it would not really matter," said Daisy, speaking with a muffled voice from the depth of her furs. "No one is following us. We have plenty of time. We have all the time in the world. You'll see."

They reached the first relay about six o'clock in the morning. The fierce tensivity of Daisy's nerves had not yet given away and she sat bolt upright in the sitting room of the Jewish inn, where they stopped, dry-eyed, dry-lipped, her voice extinguished from fatigue. Marston took out his flask again and poured a stiff drink of brandy into her coffee, worried for fear he might not be able to get her across the frontier, for he had Victorian ideas about feminine fortitude and he was prepared to see Daisy swooning dead away at almost any moment.

"I have got money enough; it's all right," he told her, throwing his coat back and sitting down for the first time. "I have sold the four grays to the landlord here." He looked down at his boot and frowned. "It's quite all right, you see. I bought them myself—the horses, I mean, with my own money—that is, at the Jarmolincy fair. Prince Slavinsky has not yet. . . . I imagine he is waiting for the first of the year."

Daisy felt a quick pang. An unreasonable resentment against Marston for mentioning the debt at all, and a feeling of sick shame because Slavinsky had taken her money for a debt he had never paid.

Marston appeared more nervous and even more tense than she had ever seen him. The night's growth of black beard added to the strange, wild look of the man, and she wondered if he, too, like Casimir, had not fallen in love with her. "And why not?" she thought, sipping her bitter brandy-coffee, as Marston left the room again, at a sign from the landlord.

When Marston returned he told her that he had been able to arrange satisfactorily for a false passport. "I have got hold of a little Jew here who will fix everything up with the police at the frontier. You do not need even to tell who you are," he said.

Daisy buttoned up her coat and pulled her veil over her face again and took her seat beside him in the wooden *britchka*. When she saw that her beautiful gray trotters were gone, replaced by four shaggy, evil-looking post ponies, harnessed abreast, her eyes burned with tears. "I will never see them in this world again," she thought. "Never." And again the huge word weighed like lead upon her soul.

Perched like a crow beside the driver sat a small, black figure, his hat crammed down upon his ears. The stiff spring wagon bounced over the half-frozen ruts of the wide dirt road. As if in a death sleep lay the fields. Not a fence. Not a barrier. Not a village to be seen in this endless sea of desolate land.

Marston sat staring straight ahead. Only the clean sweep of his jutting chin showed between his cap and collar. Across one corner of the slow blooming east, a frail black line advanced like a javelin floating in the sky.

"Oh, look!" cried Daisy. "Wild swans. The wild swans are flying. Where are they going, I wonder?"

"Home," he answered her, for the first time raising his eyes. "It's the autumn flight."

Daisy gave a mournful little chuckle. "My poor mother tried so hard to make me say 'autumn' in the old days.. But I never would. In America we say 'fall,' you see. 'Fall flight.'"

They stood together in the rain in the early afternoon. Two days later, a very odd-looking couple, at the exit of the Nord Bahn Station in Vienna. They had scarcely seen each other during the journey. Marston, traveling second class, came only occasionally to Daisy's compartment to inquire formally if he could be of service.

When he asked at which hotel Daisy intended to stop, she threw back her head and laughed out loud, for she was too young and too excitable by nature not to savor the adventure. "But where can I go? Where would they take me in, looking as I do, with all my worldly goods tied up like an immigrant's? Anyway," she added seriously, "I want to get out of everything for a while, and rest. I don't want to go back where I ever was known before."

Marston pulled his black brows together, hard put to it. And he appeared to ponder the situation well before replying.

"I remember a very decent little hotel near the Prâtor where some of the trainers and their wives used to go, when the races were on. Maybe you can put up with it for a little while until you decide what you want to do."

It was a different kind of hotel room from any Daisy had ever seen before. Threadbare carpet, clean coarse white curtains at the window, strung on a white wooden

sole. Funny enormous thick feather bed quilts with stiff linen sheets, buttoned back upon them. In one corner the inevitable white porcelain stove. Leading out of this room a tiny sitting room. Pushed in around a gilt center table, four imitation ebony chairs, upholstered in yellow plush. A long stiff sofa to match, over which hung a gilt mirror unmounted by a pink seashell. On the opposite wall a life-size chromo of the Emperor Franz-Joseph.

After the first shock of suspicious repulsion, Daisy's spirits bounded. It was just what she was unconsciously seeking; the escape from reality to which she always turned in moments of too great stress and strain.

"Give me another name," she whispered to Marston, who was conferring with the woman proprietor. "Call me Fraulein, Fraulein Shawn."

"I think I'll take a quick bath and change as best I can," she said as Marston turned to go. "Then I'll rush out to my bank before it is closed. And we must be very business-like and make accounts and let me pay you back everything I owe you." Flushing herself she turned away to avoid the painfully embarrassed look on Marston's face. But he protested, low-voiced, that she owed him nothing.

"Where will you go? What will you do now?" she persisted in asking him. But he would give her no direct answer, saying that everything was all right with him and he had been about to leave Russia anyway.

"Well, we must not quarrel about it yet," she said, unable to extricate herself, pretending to look out of the window. "I have to do a little shopping." Then she hesitated and flushed again. "Would you come and have a bit of dinner with me, later on?" she asked.

But Marston glanced at the door as if he were in a hurry to escape, muttering his refusal.

"Do come," she begged him. "I shall be alone. Please come, won't you?"

But, pretending some very urgent business would keep him well along into the evening, he refused again. "I'll stop by, though, between nine and ten, to see if you are all right, if you have heard anything." He glanced at her, and his over-brilliant eyes looked harassed and puzzled, as if he were driven to solve a problem beyond his strength to understand. He was gone only a minute when he knocked and came in again.

"Princess, wouldn't you like me to get hold of your friend Dr. Schultz for you? Will you give me his telephone number, or his address? You should really get in touch with some one of your friends."

But the last thing in the world she wanted just then was to sit down face to face with cold reality, and she cried out and protested that she could not bear to see Oscar Schultz that night. "I cannot bear to go over the whole story. Not until I have had some sleep. It's—how long?—three whole nights now that I have scarcely slept at all." And she looked, indeed, very frail. Her lips were pale. Her fair skin seemed to be pulled tight across her cheek bones, and the great knot of her hair too heavy for her neck to bear.

"I can't say just where I'll be stopping," said Marston finally. "But I'll call by here between nine and ten. In case you should be asleep I will leave word downstairs where you can find me to-morrow."

Daisy repaired her toilette as best she could and sallied forth, first to the bank and then to a ladies' Konfektion shop which she remembered, on the Kaentnerstrasse where she bought, with a queer, passionate desire for excess, for wanton spending, everything which on first sight touched her fancy. Three charming new autumn

hats, one with a black lace veil, which lent just that air of mystery to her appearance which her new rôle seemed to indicate. Dresses. A long cloak. Underwear. A lovely white velvet negligée. Handkerchiefs, gloves, slippers, stockings. She chose, too, an old toile de gènes with which to hide the yellow plush of her sitting room sofa, and fresh, frilly lace cushions to fill its angular corners. And on her way home she stopped her fiacre and bought an armful of roses.

Daisy made a meticulous toilette. First she knotted her hair on the nape of her neck, and then took it down and piled it upon the top of her head. Then she slipped into the new white velvet negligée and fastened its silver belt about her slender waist.

She rang and ordered her dinner from a pasty-faced waiter in a greasy tailcoat.

"And bring a bottle of Veuve Cliquot. The best," she said, raising an imperative forefinger, for she was unable to remember the right year.

"We have none in the house, *gnädiges Fräulein*. Shall we send out for it?"

"Send for it, then."

"Half a bottle?"

"But no." And she shook her head.

She sat down between the sofa pillows, a fixed smile on her face, for she knew that just behind this brilliant spray of excitement and adventure lay an unfathomable depth of anguish and of fear.

Daisy helped herself to a bit of chicken, and a little rice. "I should eat this rice, anyway," she thought. "It's nourishing." And she drank a glass of champagne straight down and waited to feel again that blessed warm unraveling of her crying nerves. Then she covered over her almost untouched plate, for the sight of food nauseated her,

emptied her glass again, and nibbled at a bit of bread. She crossed the room and sat down by the window for a while. And came back and drank again and walked about until the bottle was nearly empty. Then she turned, steadying herself with both hands clenched upon the back of the sofa, drawn by some morbid curiosity, and gazed at her own image in the mirror, hanging there.

"Fleur du Mal," she whispered, fascinated by the blurred but lovely image. "Casimir's Fleur du Mal. Putting on this velvet thing—and the pillows—and the flowers—disgusting." And she fell back again among the pillows.

Marston arrived on the stroke of nine-thirty. He saw at a glance what had happened, and he stood, refusing to take the chair she indicated with an exaggerated wave of her hand.

"I will telephone Dr. Schultz," he said, struggling to find his voice. "You should have some one to look after you. You are not well."

"No. No," she protested, and clasped her hands to her forehead as if the thought distracted her. Marston changed his overcoat from his left to his right arm, and set his lips to say good night. "Well, good night," he said stolidly, and faced about and opened the door.

"Oh, no," Daisy started up like a wild thing. "Don't leave me. I can't bear it. I can't bear to be alone."

The haggard worry in his eyes was painful to see. "I must go—I must," he insisted.

But Daisy took a few unsteady steps forward and held out her hands to him. "No," she repeated. "No."

When she woke very late next morning, on the table beside her bed she found a penciled and folded note. She stared at the handwriting and, even in the welter of

surging memory and sick emotion, she was relieved to see that it was of a rather distinguished character.

"On my way to England," the note ran. "Taking the noon train. This is for your sake. I have sent word to Doctor Schultz to look you up this afternoon. Good-bye. J. Marston."

When Oscar Schultz telephoned during the course of the afternoon, Daisy was obliged to go downstairs to the office, her street coat over her dressing gown, as there was no telephone in her room. And she forced her voice to sound full and clear. Why, no, she was perfectly well. Very well. And how was he? No, she could not see him that afternoon. She was terribly, terribly busy. She had an engagement for tea. And in the evening, too. Yes, she had an engagement for the evening, too. Why had she sent him urgent word to call her up? She had not meant to send him any such message. Oh, just a crazy English friend of hers who thought she did not just look quite well. What was she doing in such a funny little hotel? And why, for heaven's sake, the new, or rather the old, name? But Daisy passed these questions by and hurried on with light quick sentences. She wanted to see him. Had he heard lately from his mother? She was crazy to see him and get all the latest news from Chicago—from home—and she breathed a light laugh into the transmitter. Wouldn't he come next day? No? Oh, he must. Things were, after all, rather complicated—yes, something quite serious had happened—and she began to beg him, her bright voice breaking, before she realized what she was about. And so it was arranged that he would call for her at noon next day and take her to the Rathskeller for lunch, or anywhere else that he liked, so long as it was quiet and unfashionable.

Daisy climbed wearily back up the stairs. Her knees

trembled. She felt very sick, and she sank weakly beside the window, resting her elbow on the sill. "What shall do? Where shall I go?" Her thoughts drifted aimlessly without resting anywhere. And sinking under the memories of the night, she covered her face with her two hands. For the first time in her life she lost the last shreds of her courage. She felt like a drowning man clinging to a spar who knows at last he must let go. And she told herself that it was all finished and done. She had reached the very bottom and she would stay there. She could never be herself, Daisy Shawn, again. Presently she rang for the waiter and ordered herself a brandy and soda.

But Daisy was very young, and strong, with the resiliency of her marvelous youth; and toward evening there came a moment when she could no longer bear to think the same thoughts over and over and over, sitting there alone. So she put on her new black silk dress, freshened by a little lace collar and the charming little black hat tilted to one side. Over this she dropped a floating black veil which accentuated the fascinating pallor and dark wide eyes of her still childish face.

When she reached the street she looked up and she looked down. It made no difference where she went. She had no place to go. But seeing a passing *fiacre* she hailed it, and "*Spatzirengehen*"—she told the driver, with a wave of her hand, as she climbed in.

At the corner of the Kaentnerstrasse she dismissed her *fiacre* and, picking up her skirts, loitered idly by the shop windows. She came to Pessel's, the fashionable court coiffeur of that time, and remembering that she was in need of a few more shell hairpins, she turned to go in, and came face to face with Marietta Lichtenwald. And forgetting all her former hate and injury, for here

at last was a familiar face, with a glad cry she laid her hand on Marietta's arm. The red nostrils dilated. The pop-eyes froze, the arm withdrew itself from Daisy's touch, and Marietta passed on. Daisy went in and bought hair pins, paid for them, making the same mistake twice over in the change. Then she hailed another cab and drove back to her hotel.

Halfway home the thought struck her—Slavinsky! But he must be in town? How else would Marietta know? Perhaps he had come to find her again. Perhaps he wanted to see her . . . to tell her . . . ? Perhaps he would be waiting for her. . . . But no! How could he find her? Even if he wanted to. . . . She must telephone . . . send messengers . . . find him somehow . . . speak to him . . . see him with her own eyes again. She asked the Oberskellner at the hotel to call the Jockey Club on the telephone for her and ask for Prince Slavinsky and then Sachers', if he were not there, and then one after the other all the prominent hotels in town.

But at no one of these addresses could she find trace of him, and the inevitable reaction set in. Well, she would stay where she was to-night, she decided. She could bear that. She would have to bear it. She must begin to try to be sensible. Like other women. And sleep. Prepare for the morrow. She must wait—learn to wait like other people. Other people could wait. She had never been able to wait and that had always got her into so much trouble. But every footstep, every sound outside the door, each slowing up of a cab coming around the corner shook her nerves again and set her pulses flying. Although she told herself over and over again, not only did Slavinsky not know where she was but, even if he did, he would not make the first effort to find her.

No, no, she must have peace and put these thoughts

out, snuff them out like a candle, kill them. Sleep. Extermination. She must have sleep. Hide herself in nothingness, sleep.

Daisy snatched up her hat and cloak and ran out down the street, to a nearby chemist for a box of verona powders. "*Einz,*" said the man, holding up one finger looking at her severely over his spectacles. But what had she to do now with moderation? And before even taking off her wraps she had swallowed two powders down, shaking the bitter stuff with trembling fingers on the tip of her tongue. Then she undressed, washed carefully and went to bed. There seemed to be no intermediate stages. One second every nerve strained and ached, and the thoughts in her head whirled like crazy pinwheels. The next second it was as if she had fallen off a cliff a mile below.

At noon Oscar Schultz arrived at Daisy's hotel and was informed by a worried-looking proprietress that although they had knocked very loud and very, very long, and the chambermaid had gone several times right into Fraulein's room, they had been unable to rouse her. She had looked quite ill ever since she came, said the woman, rather accusingly. She was glad the doctor was an old friend. And she crossed her large clean hands upon her black alpaca apron.

Oscar went up alone into Daisy's room. The door was unlocked. She lay with that absorbed, grave, withdrawn look which likens profound sleep to death. Her eyelids seemed glued against her white cheek, her bare arms plunged through the web of her hair. Oscar took her pulse and, standing there, holding her limp hand in his, he noticed the two open powder papers lying on the night table and, wetting one finger, he just tasted the remaining dust of bitter crystals.

Daisy opened her eyes, opaque, expressionless as the eyes of a new-born child, and let them drop again, while Oscar drew up a chair with a professional manner, close to her bed. The lids fluttered open, dropped, and half opened to stay. Daisy pulled herself up on her elbow, her brain still clogged with the overdose of the unaccustomed drug she had taken.

"Why, Oscar," she said, her numb lips moving stiffly.

"You see," he said, "it's rather late. I was afraid you might be ill, but I see you are not—really. Now I'll tell you what—have your coffee, a nice hot, strong cup, and by the time you are dressed and about, say around three o'clock, I'll be back. I've got to run along to lunch and a lecture now." He seemed friendly and cheerful and spoke very slowly, with great emphasis, and he watched her closely with a round and professional eye.

After Daisy had bathed and finished her coffee, she brushed out her hair and started to get dressed. But she felt still so dazed, so weak and apathetic that, seeing she had still an hour's time, she fell back upon her bed in her dressing-gown and pulled up a corner of the feather quilt. But, just as she was about to drift off into sleep again, the door opened and there stood Slavinsky. Speechless she looked at him. And a great tide of warm, sweet life-blood, of wild hope and joy rose from her heart and poured through her veins. He wore a bright brown overcoat with a brown velvet collar, and he carried his brown derby hat in one hand and a bunch of violets in the other. He paid no apparent attention to the disorder of the plain little room, nor the singular condition of his wife, nor did he betray the slightest surprise at any detail of the scene.

"I imagine I will not see you again," he said, smiling

faintly, in his rather high staccato. "You will, of course, be returning very soon to America. I have brought you these violets for a little good-bye present." Then, smiling as if amused, he looked around the room seemingly in search of a spot on which to deposit the violets. And finding none, he dropped them on top of a soiled towel which trailed from the corner of the washstand.

"*Bon voyage*," he said, nodding his head and backing through the door and, still faintly smiling, he gently closed it behind him.

Oscar found Daisy lying upon her bed, flattened out in a meaningless way like seaweed cast upon the shore.

"I thought you'd be all dressed, up and about," he said, dropping into his brisk professional voice and manner, and drawing up a chair. Daisy opened her eyes, stared at him and closed them again. "Slavinsky was here," she said.

"Just let me feel your pulse." Oscar reached forward, pulled out his watch and took the count. "Have you any plans, Daisy, anything you want to do?" he asked, his eyes on the second hand. She faintly shook her head. "Going to stay on here?" She hid her face in the crook of her arm and did not answer him.

Oscar closed his watch with a snap and leaned back in his chair and fixed his eyes, serious and round, upon Daisy's face. "My Aunt Greta, Mother's sister, is going over to spend Christmas with us in Chicago. Greta will be there, too. I'm through here and I've been planning to go, for some time. She looks just like Mother, Aunt Greta—you'd be surprised. Now, supposing my aunt and I were to sail next Saturday, instead of a few weeks later?" Daisy faintly shook her head. "Well, Daisy, I don't know what your trouble is, but whatever it is, I wish you'd let

me be your doctor." Silence. "I can't very well sit by and see you do stupid things to yourself, now, can I, Daisy?" he asked her, leaning forward again.

And again she shook her head. "Now, I've arranged for Aunt Greta to come and spend the night with you here, anyhow—see? And I've already ordered a bed for her in the next room." Daisy closed her eyes and lay perfectly still. He took her hand between his two broad palms. "I don't know what your trouble is, Daisy, but if it would help you any to tell me——"

Little by little she told him the whole story as faithfully as she knew how, and when she had finished what she had to say about herself and Marston, "I guess I never had much character," she whispered, and began to cry, for the first time. The tears streamed down her face.

Oscar tried, all through, to keep to his best professional manner, but he had rather a hard time of it. He had not gone when his Aunt Greta came in towards evening, wearing a funny hard felt hat, set on the back of her neat blond plaited hair, rosy and plump, with shrewd kind eyes behind her glasses, like her sister's.

"She's coming with us, Aunt Greta," Oscar announced in German, before she had time to seat herself. "She's getting some sense, you see."

"*Nu ja*," cried the old lady, and clasped Daisy's limp hands between both of her own.

"Aunt Greta understands English," Oscar went on. "You tell her yourself, Daisy. Tell her what you just told me."

And Daisy told her. "I want to go back home to Chicago," she said.

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